

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

February 6, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1609 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE.**

Hearing: Monday, February 10, 2025, Time 1:20 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the bill's intent with suggested amendments and provides comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to establish and implement an early learning contracts program to make available a designated number of seats at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and family child care centers for families referred by the department at a negotiated rate and schedule. Requires DHS to submit reports to the Legislature.

DHS can use contracts for direct service slots and has recently been granted a waiver by the federal Office of Child Care (OCC) to temporarily exempt DHS from meeting the specified provisions in the 2024 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule for grants or contracts for direct services for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children in underserved geographic areas.

DHS has requested consultation with federal advisors about how CCDF may be used to increase the supply and quality of care and best practices learned from other CCDF lead agencies on successful implementation of contracting child care services.

Additionally, DHS will issue a Request for Information to understand market options from service providers as part of the procurement process for this service. The department seeks to determine the per child cost necessary for a contracted infant and toddler classroom to ensure stable funding, as well as the feasibility of a center exclusively enrolling subsidized children, and the development of a workable contract payment structure or structures and would welcome comments on this subject by proponents of this measure.

DHS understands the importance of improving child care affordability for families, parent choice, and stable child care operations and respectfully recommends the following **amendments** to include reference to the State Constitution:

- **Section 2, paragraph (b), line 4, to read:** The department of human services shall contract directly with licensed infant and toddler child care centers, **provided that a child care center shall not be eligible for a contract if the center is part of, owned by, or operated by a private educational institution and the awarding of the contract would violate article X, section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution,** and **contract** through an intermediary, with family child care centers that serve:...

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII

Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Testimony on S.B. No. 1609 – RELATING TO CHILD CARE

Committee: HHS
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025
Time: 1:20 p.m.
Location: Conference Room 225

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **COMMENTS**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) supports the intent of S.B. No. 1609 which requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to implement an early learning contracts program for seats at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and family child care centers. We defer to DHS regarding implementation and funding and offer the following comments.

EOEL supports the concept of contracted early care services because of its potential to provide more stability and a better financial model for our community-based providers. Hawai'i P-20 and EOEL recently issued a Request for Proposals for contracted infant and toddler care services through Hawai'i's Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant to pilot this model. The information gathered through this pilot may serve as a resource to DHS as they consider how they would like to implement similar models.

We appreciate the Legislature's continued investment in our youngest keiki and their families and thank you for the opportunity to share these comments.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE KAIĀULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD, SUITE 200 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817
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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



ANTON C. KRUCKY
DIRECTOR
PO'O

AEDWARD LOS BANOS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

February 5, 2025

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair San Buenaventura and Vice Chair Aquino
And Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Subject: Measure S.B. No. 1609 – Relating to Child Care

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. No. 1609. We defer to the Department of Human Services regarding implementation of the bill and provide comments.

The demand for affordable, high-quality child care in Hawai'i far exceeds available capacity, leaving many families—particularly those with children under age three—struggling to secure care. At the same time, child care businesses face significant challenges in maintaining operations, as the current tuition-based model places the bulk of the financial burden on families. Without a more stable funding mechanism, many providers are unable to sustain or expand their programs, further exacerbating the child care shortage.

This bill, which establishes a contracted slot pilot program, would help stabilize child care businesses, allowing them to increase capacity while also alleviating the financial strain on families. This approach ensures a more reliable funding stream for providers while improving access to care for working families across the State.

The Department of Community Services respectfully requests an amendment to require the department to contract with at least two group child care centers on O'ahu, rather than just one. Given that O'ahu is home to over 70% of the state's population, expanding the number of contracted providers on the island would better reflect the demand for services and maximize the bill's impact.

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
February 5, 2025
Page 2

We also respectfully request the addition of requiring the department to contract with at least one licensed infant and toddler center per county as well. There is an overall shortage of early childhood seats in general, however, there is an especially critical shortage of infant-toddler care. In the most recent estimation, there were 1.5 children age 3 to 5 for each group child care center seat compared to 29 children under age 3 for each licensed infant-toddler center seat.

Should the committee be amenable, we propose the following amendments to section 2, page 2, lines 12-14:

“(1) The program shall provide contracts for at least one licensed [or-regulated] infant and toddler center per county[;]. The program shall also provide contracts for at least two licensed group child care centers in the city and county of Honolulu and one licensed group child care center in each of the counties of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai; and...”

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Anton C. Krucky
Director Designate

Date: February 8, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **SB1609**, Relating to Child Care

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS supports, with amendments, SB1609, which would require the Department of Human Services to establish and implement an early learning contracts program to make available a designated number of seats at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and family child care centers for families referred by the Department. *Funding for an early learning contracts program is available through existing federal monies.*

Hawaii faces significant unmet need for child care. There is sufficient capacity for less than 20% of children birth-5 years old in regulated child care settings, and lack of openings and long waiting lists are chronic issues for families searching for care. These capacity issues can be even more problematic for families eligible for and/or receiving child care subsidy assistance, whose financial constraints may severely limit their options to search and wait for care.

Compounding the problem are systemic disincentives for child care providers to participate in the child care subsidy system, which further decrease low-income working families' access to quality child care settings. Specifically, unstable and unpredictable enrollment and attendance of children, as well as insufficient payment rates to cover the cost of quality care can deter providers from serving subsidy children and undermine the financial stability and operating capacity of those providers who do.

Direct contracts for subsidized classrooms between DHS and infant/toddler and family child care providers, as proposed by **SB1609**, would facilitate more predictable, robust and stable payments to child care providers. The increased financial stability for child care providers provided by contracts would support their ability to staff their programs, stay in business, provide higher quality services, and potentially open up more spaces for children. Families would ultimately have more programs from which they can find and access child care.

We respectfully recommend the following amendments:

- Section 1, page 1, lines 10 to 15, clarifying and adding to the types of child care programs with which the Department may contract, to read:

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the department of human services to establish and implement an early learning services contracts program to make available a designated number of seats at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers, and registered family child care ~~centers~~ homes for families referred by the department...

- Section 2, page 2, paragraph b, lines 4 to 7, adjusting contracts with family child care providers to be an option but not mandatory, on top of contracts with infant/toddler and group child care centers:

(b) The department of human services shall contract directly with licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers, and may contract, through an intermediary, with family child care ~~centers~~ homes that serve...

- Section 2, page 2, paragraph c, lines 12 to 14, specifying the minimum number of contract types, per county, to better reflect the higher population of children and demand for child care services on O'ahu:

(c) (1) The program shall provide contracts for at least one licensed ~~or regulated child care program~~ infant and toddler center per county+. The program shall also provide contracts for at least two licensed group child care centers in the City and County of Honolulu and one licensed group child care center in each of the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kauai; and...

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in support of SB1609**. With the limited availability of quality, affordable child care options for our keiki, the bill's proposal to stabilize and support the financial viability and operating capacity of our child care programs and incentivize their participation in the subsidy system is key to sustaining and increasing access to the child care families need to survive and thrive.



Hearing Date: **Monday, February 10, 2025, 1:45 PM, Conf. Rm 225**

To: Committee on Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1609, Relating to Child Care

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and the Members of the Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB 1609** which establishes a child care classroom contracts program requiring the Department of Human Services (DHS) to contract directly with child care center providers in licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers.

Hawai'i is experiencing a child care crisis. The demand for available, quality, and affordable child care far exceeds the current capacity in Hawaii. There is only one opening for every four children ages six and below. The situation is even worse for those seeking a child care space for infants and toddlers with only one opening for every 37 children. This leaves families, and single parent households in particular in a bind.

Families eligible for subsidies often can't afford to wait the months it may take to get off of a waitlist. They must find care immediately to keep the job that meets the work requirements for the subsidies.

By improving financial stability, this measure also helps child care providers maintain operations and avoid program closures.

This measure will support a consistent supply of child care slots for families receiving subsidies and incentivize child care providers to continue caring for them.

Please pass this measure and mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Evans".

Jean Evans
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all-volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy. Our goal is economic security for women and their families.



February 10, 2025

Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura
Vice Chair Henry J.C. Aquino
Sen. Troy N. Hashimoto
Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole
Sen. Kurt Fevella

Re: SB1609 Relating to Child Care

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters. On behalf of HSCADV and our 25 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of SB1609**, which would increase access to quality child care for families receiving subsidies and improve the sustainability of childcare programs.

This bill addresses one of the most pressing and costly concerns for survivors of domestic violence - childcare access. **Survivors cite housing and access to childcare as the top two reasons they stay with an abusive partner, especially if the partner's family is providing childcare. The lack of childcare also impacts survivors' ability to seek and maintain employment, receive medical attention, attend court hearings, and access other services.**

Childcare providers are struggling to keep their programs afloat, in part due to unstable financing mechanisms. This has devastating consequences for Hawai'i's families with young children, many of whom are unable to find childcare.

This bill would increase the ability of subsidy-eligible families to access high-quality early learning services at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers. Contracts provide a stable and reliable financing mechanism for childcare providers by basing subsidy payments on child enrollment rather than attendance. This ensures funding stays with the provider even if a child leaves the program. By improving financial stability, this measure helps childcare providers maintain operations and avoid program closures, helping families get off the waitlist.

Ultimately, early learning contracts benefit children, families, and providers by ensuring a consistent supply of care for subsidy-eligible families while supporting providers in continuing to care for our youngest keiki. Additionally, this measure strengthens Hawai'i's economy by helping parents and guardians return to the workforce or continue their education or training.

Hawai'i's childcare industry has been under-resourced and financially unstable for too long, affecting the lives of children, families, and employers across the state. We need innovative measures, such as this early learning contracts program, to support our early care and education field and ensure a brighter future for Hawai'i's keiki and 'ohana.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director



**Parents And
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST**

LATE

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1609 RELATING TO CHILD CARE

TO: Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino, & Members,
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: February 10, 2025 at 1:20 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports SB 1609 Relating to Child Care, which would increase access to quality childcare for families receiving subsidies and improve the sustainability of child care programs.

Child care providers are struggling to keep their programs afloat, in part due to unstable and financing mechanisms. This has devastating consequences for Hawai'i's families with young children, many of whom are unable to find child care. This bill would increase the ability of subsidy-eligible families to access high quality early learning services at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers. Contracts provide a stable and reliable financing mechanism for child care providers by basing subsidy payments on child enrollment rather than attendance. This ensures funding stays with the provider even if a child leaves their program. It helps child care providers maintain operations and avoid program closures, helping families get off waitlists and allowing them to return to work.

Early learning contracts benefit children, families, and providers by ensuring a consistent supply of care for subsidy-eligible families while supporting providers in continuing to care for our youngest keiki. Additionally, this measure strengthens Hawai'i's economy by helping parents and guardians return to the workforce or continue their education or training.

Hawai'i's child care industry has been under-resourced and financially unstable for too long, affecting the lives of children, families, and employers across the state. We need innovative measures, such as this early learning contracts program, to support our early care and education field and ensure a brighter future for Hawai'i's keiki and 'ohana.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

LATE

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Chevelle Davis, Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure S.B. No. 1609 – Relating to Child Care

Hearing: Monday, February 10, 2025, at 1:20 PM, Conference Room 225

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of S.B. No. 1609**, which seeks to establish an early learning services contracts program to support child care providers and increase access to affordable child care for Hawai'i's families.

The need for affordable child care in Hawai'i is greater than ever, with demand far outpacing available options – especially for families with children under age three. Parents are left scrambling to find reliable care, while child care providers struggle to keep their doors open due to the heavy financial burden placed on families by the current tuition-based model. Many providers simply cannot sustain or grow their programs without a more stable funding system, worsening an already critical shortage.

This bill represents a critical step in increasing access to early learning for Hawai'i's keiki and supporting families needing these essential services by providing child care businesses with a more reliable funding stream, allowing them to expand their services in high-need areas while reducing the financial pressure on families. By creating a more sustainable system, we can support both providers and working families, ensuring that more keiki have access to the care they need.

Given that most of Hawai'i's population resides on O'ahu, we respectfully request an amendment requiring the Department of Human Services to contract with at least two group child care centers on the island rather than just one. This amendment would better align resources with population needs, ensuring the bill has the greatest possible impact.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of S.B. No. 1609**.

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 10:21:45 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Espinas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB1609.

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:21:11 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caitlin Kryss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and committee members,

I am testifying in support of SB 1609, which would increase access to quality child care for families receiving subsidies and improve the sustainability of child care programs.

Child care providers are struggling to keep their programs afloat, in part due to unstable and financing mechanisms. This has devastating consequences for Hawai‘i’s families with young children, many of whom are unable to find child care.

This bill would increase the ability of subsidy-eligible families to access high quality early learning services at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers. Contracts provide a stable and reliable financing mechanism for child care providers by basing subsidy payments on child enrollment rather than attendance. This ensures funding stays with the provider even if a child leaves their program.

By improving financial stability, this measure helps child care providers maintain operations and avoid program closures, helping families get off the waitlist and allowing them to return to work.

Ultimately, early learning contracts benefit children, families, and providers by ensuring a consistent supply of care for subsidy-eligible families while supporting providers in continuing to care for our youngest keiki. Additionally, this measure strengthens Hawai‘i’s economy by helping parents and guardians return to the workforce or continue their education or training.

Hawai‘i’s child care industry has been under-resourced and financially unstable for too long, affecting the lives of children, families, and employers across the state. We need innovative measures, such as this early learning contracts program, to support our early care and education field and ensure a brighter future for Hawai‘i’s keiki and ‘ohana.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Caitlin Kryss, Mountain View, Hawaii Island

Date: February 9, 2025

To: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
and members of the House Committee on Education

Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Measure S.B. No. 1609 – Relating to Child Care

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of S.B. No. 1609.

Aloha,

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. Currently, I am the Director of the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE³) Project at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa College of Education.

I am testifying in strong support of SB 1609, which would establish a child care classroom contracts pilot program through the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop and implement procedures to subsidize child care by contracting for classrooms in licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers.

Problem:

In Hawaii, there is a lack of child care openings and long waiting lists are chronic issues for families searching for child care. These capacity issues can be even more problematic for families eligible for and/or receiving child care subsidy assistance, whose financial constraints may severely limit their options to search and wait for care.

Compounding the problem are systemic disincentives for child care providers to participate in the child care subsidy system, which further decrease low-income working families' access to quality child care settings.

Specifically, unstable and unpredictable enrollment and attendance of children, as well as insufficient payment rates to cover the cost of quality care can deter providers from serving subsidized children and undermine the financial stability and operating capacity of those providers who do.

Solution:

Direct contracts for subsidized classrooms between DHS and infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers, as proposed by SB 1609, would facilitate a more predictable and stable financing mechanism for child care providers. Contracts would be based on subsidy payments on child enrollment rather than attendance. This ensures funding stays with the provider even if a child leaves their program. The increased financial stability for child care providers via contracts would support their ability to staff their programs, stay in business,

provide higher quality services, and potentially open up more spaces for children. Families would ultimately have more programs from which they can find and access child care.

Contracts provide a stable and reliable financing mechanism for child care providers by basing subsidy payments on child enrollment rather than attendance. This ensures funding stays with the provider even if a child leaves their program.

Stabilizing and supporting the financial viability and operating capacity of our child care programs and incentivizing their participation in the subsidy system is key to sustaining and increasing access to the child care families need to survive and thrive.

Ultimately, early learning contracts benefit children, families, and providers by ensuring a consistent supply of care for subsidy-eligible families while supporting providers in continuing to care for our youngest keiki. Additionally, this measure strengthens Hawai'i's economy by helping parents and guardians return to the workforce or continue their education or training.

Mahalo for supporting SB 1609.

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:42:09 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For SB 1609 it is important to note that this is the version of the bill that HCAN Speaks! worked with DHS on based on HECAA recommendations. To highlight, in this bill, contracts are a standing program, not a pilot, include Family Childcare and we would also like to request a minimum of one contract per county and a minimum of two per in Honolulu County.

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:44:44 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lianne Jernigan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: February 10, 2025

To: Senator San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Aquino, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: [Name]

[Organization, if applicable]

Subject: Measure S.B. No. 1609 – Relating to Child Care

Position: Strong Support

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and committee members,

I am testifying in support of SB 1609, which would increase access to quality child care for families receiving subsidies and improve the sustainability of child care programs.

Child care providers are struggling to keep their programs afloat, in part due to unstable and financing mechanisms. This has devastating consequences for Hawai'i's families with young children, many of whom are unable to find child care.

This bill would increase the ability of subsidy-eligible families to access high quality early learning services at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers. Contracts provide a stable and reliable financing mechanism for child care providers by basing subsidy payments on child enrollment rather than attendance. This ensures funding stays with the provider even if a child leaves their program.

By improving financial stability, this measure helps child care providers maintain operations and avoid program closures, helping families get off the waitlist and allowing them to return to work.

In Addition, In my own experience it prohibits myself from entering the work force and unable to contribute to society as a tax paying citizen.

Ultimately, early learning contracts benefit children, families, and providers by ensuring a consistent supply of care for subsidy-eligible families while supporting providers in continuing to care for our youngest keiki. Additionally, this measure strengthens Hawai'i's economy by helping parents and guardians return to the workforce or continue their education or training.

Hawai'i's child care industry has been under-resourced and financially unstable for too long, affecting the lives of children, families, and employers across the state. We need innovative measures, such as this early learning contracts program, to support our early care and education field and ensure a brighter future for Hawai'i's keiki and 'ohana.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo,

Lianne Jernigan

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:11:01 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and committee members,

I am testifying in support of SB 1609, which would increase access to quality child care for families receiving subsidies and improve the sustainability of child care programs.

Child care providers are struggling to keep their programs afloat, in part due to unstable and financing mechanisms. This has devastating consequences for Hawai‘i’s families with young children, many of whom are unable to find child care.

This bill would increase the ability of subsidy-eligible families to access high quality early learning services at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers. Contracts provide a stable and reliable financing mechanism for child care providers by basing subsidy payments on child enrollment rather than attendance. This ensures funding stays with the provider even if a child leaves their program.

By improving financial stability, this measure helps child care providers maintain operations and avoid program closures, helping families get off the waitlist and allowing them to return to work.

Supporting Hawaii parents in their ability to work is crucial to supporting a strong economy.

Ultimately, early learning contracts benefit children, families, and providers by ensuring a consistent supply of care for subsidy-eligible families while supporting providers in continuing to care for our youngest keiki. Additionally, this measure strengthens Hawai‘i’s economy by helping parents and guardians return to the workforce or continue their education or training.

Hawai‘i’s child care industry has been under-resourced and financially unstable for too long, affecting the lives of children, families, and employers across the state. We need innovative measures, such as this early learning contracts program, to support our early care and education field and ensure a brighter future for Hawai‘i’s keiki and ‘ohana.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo,

Shay Chan Hodges

Haiku, Maui

LATE

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:13:00 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
christopher castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Support this bill.

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:37:22 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chloe Pua'ena Vierra-Villanueva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

Elaine Yamashita
105 Kamehameiki Rd.
Kula, HI 96790-8451
808-281-1216
elainey208@gmail.com
Feb. 9, 2025

LATE

To: Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Aquino, Vice Chair
Members of the Health and Human Services committee

From: Elaine Yamashita

Re: SB 1609 support

Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the committee:

I've been an advocate for early childhood care and education since the 1980s. I am professor emerita of University of Hawai'i Maui College, where I was the program coordinator from 2000-2019. I am also the current chair of the Early Learning Board, however this testimony is my personal testimony.

I support SB 1609, which would allow the Dept. of Human Services to contract with child care providers to provide infant/toddler care.

This provides another mechanism to meet the needs of families with young children and support the programs that provide infant/toddler care. It has worked well in other states.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,
Elaine Yamashita

LATE

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:29:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Linde	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. It is important for us to continue to consider creative approaches to providing families with reliable, affordable, and high-quality child care access for the good of the keiki, the community, the workforce, and the economy. This bill speaks to that goal. Mahalo for your consideration!

SB-1609

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:11:18 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/10/2025 1:20:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and committee members,

I strongly support SB 1609 because it would increase access to quality child care for families receiving subsidies and improve the sustainability of child care programs. This is so important for families and their keiki who have not yet reached school age, and for child care providers who are struggling to keep their programs viable.

This stress for families and child care providers is unnecessary and should not exist. Working parents need child care for their children and child care providers need to be able to stay afloat. It is good for the success of working parents and good for our state's economy and the future success of our keiki to pass this legislation.

Hawaii's child care industry has been under-resourced and financially unstable for far too long. This bill would increase the ability of subsidy-eligible families to access high quality early learning services at licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers. Currently, there are a lack of programs due to poor financing mechanisms for child care centers.

Parents on wait-lists for child care, or experiencing program closures puts our State's workforce at risk and leads to devastating consequences for Hawaii's families with young children. Proposed contracts would eliminate these problems by providing a stable and reliable financing mechanism for child care providers by basing subsidy payments on child enrollment rather than attendance. This ensures funding stays with the provider even if the child leaves the program.

We desperately need the innovative measures proposed in SB 1609, such as the early learning contracts program, to support our early care and education workers and centers and ensure a brighter future for Hawai'i's keiki and their families.

Mahalo,

Beth Anderson