



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 15, 2017

TO: The Honorable Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HCR 7 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO EXAMINE THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL WHO QUALIFY**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 15, 2017, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the resolution and offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of HCR 12 is to request the Department of Human Services to provide information regarding the cost of transitioning to a paperless or cost-free application process for the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program and to submit its findings and recommendations to the Legislature for the 2018 session.

Act 169, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2013, established the POD program as the statewide school readiness program. The POD program assists low and moderate income families who are least able to afford preschool and provide their children with the opportunity to be ready for kindergarten by providing child care subsidies for preschool costs.

Since the 2015-2016 POD year, the current POD contractor, People Attentive to Children (PATCH), has accepted faxed and emailed applications submitted to the POD office on Oahu. Furthermore, PATCH has offices on the islands of Kauai and Maui and has 2 offices on Hawaii. All of the Neighbor Island PATCH offices have assisted families in submitting the POD applications to the Oahu POD office, via fax, if the families go to the PATCH offices on those

islands. The POD program will continue to accept applications submitted through electronic means (e.g. fax or email).

As to an on-line application process, DHS is continuing to develop and design the DHS Enterprise system to update the Department's 30 year old legacy data systems. The Med-QUEST division's KOLEA eligibility application for medical insurance coverage was the first to provide on-line eligibility and determination capabilities as required by the Affordable Care Act.

DHS is currently in the procurement process to add additional functionality to the DHS Enterprise system for the financial assistance programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and Child Welfare Services and Adult Protective and Care Services' systems.

To assure that DHS programs are aligned, DHS is using a multi-generational approach to realign its programs. The 'Ohana Nui framework involves streamlining existing programs and funding to improve efficiencies and outcomes to achieve the greatest return on investment. Once programs are aligned through 'Ohana Nui and the DHS Enterprise system is built, nearly all of DHS programs will be interoperable. The development of multi-generational and interoperable programs through 'Ohana Nui, and improvements to the IT operating system are essential for DHS to move toward a single on-line application for all DHS programs, including medical, financial, SNAP, and child care subsidies, including POD subsidies.

The DHS Enterprise initiative is the Department's priority, with targeted completion date of the end of 2018, to leverage currently available funding from the federal Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). DHS asks for the Legislature's continued commitment and support for the development and maintenance of the DHS Enterprise system. Cost to develop, implement, secure and maintain the DHS Enterprise system are significant, however, at this time providing the cost for a single on-line application process for POD is not available.

In addition to costs associated with the DHS Enterprise system, DHS Child Care Program Office (CCPO) would require additional staffing and resources to address the changes this resolution proposes.

The priority of the CCPO is to bring the state into compliance with changes in federal law. In addition to state funded POD, Hawaii receives \$22 million annually in Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grants from the U.S. Department of Health & Human

Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care. The CCDF grant funds provides for Hawaii's child care licensing, quality initiatives, and federally funded child care subsidy programs.

On November 19, 2014, President Obama signed the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014, Public Law 113-186, reauthorizing the CCDF. The CCDBG Act made significant changes to the health and safety requirements for child care providers and made public access to information a priority. Final regulatory changes, 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 98, were issued September 30, 2016 and became effective on November 29, 2016. While certain deadlines are imminent, the deadline for DHS to complete all of the required changes is September 30, 2018. DHS is focused on complying with these federal law and regulatory changes to preserve Hawaii's access to the federal CCDF grant funds.

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



March 13, 2017

To: Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
Representative Chris Todd, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

From: Karen Worthington, Project Coordinator
Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: HCR7 – Urging the Department of Human Services to Examine the Application Process for the Preschool Open Doors Program to Ensure Accessibility for All Who Qualify

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329, March 15, 2017, 9:30 AM

Position: Action Strategy **supports** HCR7 Urging the Department of Human Services to Examine the Application Process for the Preschool Open Doors Program to Ensure Accessibility for All Who Qualify

Dear Representative Morikawa, Representative Todd and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Early Childhood Action Strategy, a public private collaborative that recognizes the strength of communities and works across sectors to increase the number of young children in Hawaii who are born healthy, developing on track, ready for school when they enter kindergarten, and proficient learners by third grade.

Action Strategy supports HCR7 which urges the Department of Human Services to examine the application process for the Preschool Open Doors program and explore transitioning to a paperless or cost-free application process. The Preschool Open Doors program is a critical support program for some of our state's neediest families. Ensuring an equitable and easy application process is an important step in having this program support those who need it most. When families are struggling to meet their children's basic needs, an application process that is difficult to navigate or requires printing or postage can pose an insurmountable barrier to accessing critical support services.

The Preschool Open Doors program, started in 1990, is essential to supporting Hawaii's families with young children. The average cost of child care in Hawaii is approximately \$8,040 per year. For

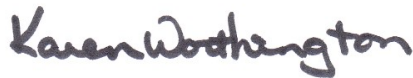
most families, child care is their second highest expense after paying for housing. The POD subsidy allows families with low and low-moderate incomes to afford a high quality early learning setting for their children and increases the possibility that parents can work or pursue higher education or training. Access to stimulating, safe child care would not be possible for these families without POD subsidies.

High Quality Early Learning Programs are a critical component of Hawaii's early childhood system because high quality early learning programs:

- support parents and families in nurturing their children
- help track children's development and recommend when screening should occur for developmental delays or developmental differences
- help parents and children benefit from interventions that follow developmental screenings
- help families identify needed community resources
- allow parents to work or pursue their education
- promote the social and emotional development of young children
- prepare children to enter school as kindergarteners.

Action Strategy is committed to ensuring Hawaii's young children are healthy, safe and ready to learn and HBCR7 supports that vision. Please feel free to contact me for additional information. I can be reached at 808-214-9336 or karen@clnhawaii.org.

Sincerely,



Karen Worthington, JD
Project Coordinator
Early Childhood Action Strategy
700 Bishop Street, Ste. 701
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

todd2 - Chloe

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2017 3:32 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: mendezj@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HCR7 on Mar 10, 2017 09:30AM*

HCR7

Submitted on: 3/7/2017

Testimony for HUS on Mar 10, 2017 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Kainoa Correa
March 13, 2017

Measure Title: URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO EXAMINE THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL WHO QUALIFY.

Report Title: Preschool Open Doors; Application Process

BILL NO: HCR7

Introducer(s): LOPRESTI, AQUINO, CACHOLA, DECOITE, EVANS, FUKUMOTO, GATES, HAR, ICHIYAMA, LOWEN, MCKELVEY, MIZUNO, MORIKAWA, OSHIRO, QUINLAN, TAKAYAMA, THIELEN

Hearing Date: March 13, 2017
Hearing Time: 9:30 AM
Hearing Place: Conference Room 329
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Introduction

I am a mother of two and am currently in the process of applying for preschool for one of my children. My application experience has been challenging, especially when the application process requires the papers to be mailed in or submitted in person. I am in support of HCR7 because every child deserves the opportunity to attend preschool. Allowing for application submission electronically will enable parents to apply in an efficient and timely manner.

The Preschool Open Doors sounds like a fantastic program that can benefit children who don't have the financial means to pay for private preschool. The cost for preschool on Maui ranges from \$650-\$800 a month. Local families cannot afford to send their children to preschool. Preschool is a vital experience where children learn academic, social, creative and important developmental skills that prepare them for elementary.

For these reasons, I am in support of HCR7 which urges the department of Human Services to examine the application process for the Preschool Open Doors program to ensure accessibility for all who qualify.

Kainoa Correa

todd2 - Chloe

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2017 4:17 PM
To: HUSstestimony
Cc: burgharc@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR7 on Mar 15, 2017 09:30AM

HCR7

Submitted on: 3/13/2017

Testimony for HUS on Mar 15, 2017 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl	Individual	Support	No

Comments: We should always be checking to make sure that our admissions are fulfilling the guidelines of the law? ? Who will do this, how and what amount of money needed?

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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March 14, 2017

To: Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
Representative Chris Todd, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **HCR 7 – Urging the Department of Human Services to Examine the Application Process for the Preschool Open Doors Program to Ensure Accessibility for All Who Qualify.**

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329, March 15, 2017, 9:30 AM

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), we are writing to support HCR 7 – Urging the Department of Human Services to Examine the Application Process for the Preschool Open Doors Program to Ensure Accessibility for All Who Qualify.

Preschool Open Doors was started in 1990, to provide high-quality childcare to qualifying low-income families. We fully support an examination of how to improve the promotion/marketing of the program to ensure that families are aware of the subsidy and application process itself to reduce barriers for families.

By providing the ability for families to complete the application online, simplify or streamline the application and remove any other barriers for applying, the families and children that need the Preschool Open Doors program the most will have better access.

This is an opportunity to improve the chances for Hawaii's children to succeed by increasing the reach of the program.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee pass this resolution.

HCAN is committed to building a unified voice advocating for Hawaii's children by improving their safety, health, and education. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2017 Hawaii Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2017policyagenda>.