



TO: Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services and Chair Baker, Vice Chair Change and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

DATE/LOCATION: February 19, 2020; 2:45 p.m., Conference Room 016

RE: TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR 15 and SR 16 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE HAWAII'S HOME VISITING PROGRAM.

We agree with the legislature's findings and strongly support this concurrent resolution. We work collaboratively with the Department of Health. Its early intervention and home visiting programs, like Healthy Start, for Hawaii's keiki and families plays a critical role in strengthening families and we strongly support the expansion of these programs. In 2018, Hawaii received \$3.8M in federal MIECHV funding for home visiting services through the Department of Health to support the positive growth of our keiki and families and expanded DOH's reach to potentially serve over 1,700 participants.

Every keiki in Hawaii deserves a safe and nurturing home.

Early childhood neuroscience is clear that the first 1,000 days of each life provides the foundation for future development. Working with parents and their keiki at an early age to promote healthy child development, school readiness, nurturing parenting skills, and reduce toxic family stress is critical for future success. As a provider of child abuse prevention programs including early intervention and home visiting services in Hawaii, Parents And Children Together encourages the continued support to sustain quality programs that strengthen families, mitigate risk factors and increase protective factors. Child abuse prevention programs have played a critical role in ensuring that parents and keiki get the support they need to help them create strong foundations needed to build upon for future success. These programs provide quality care for both a child along with their family during the most critical years of a child's development increasing future health, educational, social and emotional development for a child and their entire family network.

We hope that Hawaii continues to make investments in early intervention and home visiting programs, especially to leverage federal funding. Investments in early intervention and prevention programs can provide great future value for our communities with cost savings in areas such as health, welfare assistance and special education services down the road. An investment in early intervention and family strengthening programs is an investment in the healthy futures of our keiki and families in Hawaii.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 18 programs. Among its 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 and economic development programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on **SCR 15 and SR 16**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

SR-16

Submitted on: 2/15/2020 4:55:52 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/19/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments: