



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 8, 2022

TO: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

FROM: Coleen Momohara, Interim Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 2701 – RELATING TO EARLY EDUCATION
Hearing Date: Wednesday February 9, 2022
Time: 3:15 p.m.
Location: Room 309 and Videoconference

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Supports the Intent

Aloha. I am Coleen Momohara, Interim Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports the intent of S.B. 2701, which would establish an early child care worker subsidy pilot program and makes an appropriation to the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special fund and defers to the Department of Human Services (DHS) on other parts of the bill.

EOEL is committed to increasing access while building the infrastructure needed to make sure the State's investment reaps the intended returns. **One of the things we've learned from our Program, as well as our collaborative work across private and public partners in the field, is that most, if not all, of us cannot find enough qualified staff to expand quickly.** We must be sure this workforce is in place if we want new classrooms and programs to have qualified educators and for successful expansion.

Challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff are a significant barrier to sustaining the early learning workforce. Despite working in a specialized field with health, safety, and educational requirements and having higher levels of education than the average American worker (Whitebook et al., 1990), many early childhood care and education providers remain at the second or third percentile in the Bureau of Labor and Statistics rankings of occupation, making wages comparable to that of parking lot attendants, bartenders, and laundry service workers. The median wage of child care workers in Hawaii is \$12.43. 16 percent of child care workers are living in poverty, compared to the 10 percent of the general population in Hawaii (Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2020). **EOEL recognizes that increasing compensation is an effective way to increase recruitment and retention of a qualified early learning workforce,** and we defer

to the DHS regarding the components of the early child care worker subsidy pilot program and its implementation.

Act 210, SLH 2021, established the Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program. This program, administered by EOEL in partnership with the University of Hawaii, currently leverages private source funding that would provide upfront financial support, covering early childhood tuition and fees, to individuals in the early care and education system. **This program targets individuals already working in the sector and appropriations to the program would provide sustainability and much-needed support for educators and providers who are an undervalued and under-supported workforce.**

EOEL recommends the following amendments:

- Section 1, line 14, subsection (2): “Make an appropriation to the ~~Hawaii early childhood educator~~ Early Learning special fund.”
- Section 4, line 15: “There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the ~~Hawaii Early childhood educator~~ Early Learning Special Fund established pursuant to Section ~~302L-40-5~~.”

The Hawaii early childhood educator special fund, to be administered by EOEL, shall have moneys received by the office pursuant to section 302L-9(e), which refer to stipend funds repaid by a stipend recipient. Furthermore, this special fund shall be abolished and repealed on June 30, 2023. Appropriating funds to the Early Learning Special Fund instead would allow EOEL to utilize the appropriations for its intended purpose and provide sustainability and continuity to the program.

We have been in discussions with legislators and are working with higher education and other stakeholders statewide to understand how we can find creative ways to increase our early learning workforce to achieve the Legislature’s vision. We look forward to continue working with the Legislature to expand access to high-quality early learning programs and services in the state and make its vision a reality.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Human Services and
Senate Committee on Education
Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 3:15 p.m.

By
Nathan Murata, Dean
College of Education
And
Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2701 – RELATING TO EARLY EDUCATION

Chairs San Buenaventura and Kidani, Vice Chairs Ihara and Kim, and members of the committees:

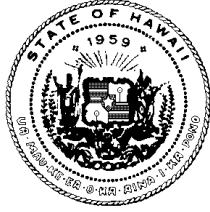
Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2701, relating to early education. This bill seeks to help retain and recruit early childhood educators. We need to make investments in our early childhood workforce to support children, our working families, and our state.

Early care and learning programs are the cornerstones of our communities. They support our youngest learners and our working families. But they are facing a crisis. Low-compensation has forced dedicated professionals to leave the field and prevented others from joining. To begin to address low compensation among early childhood educators, SB 2701, seeks to create a pilot wage subsidy program for child care workers.

In addition, a common barrier to recruiting and retaining students who are pursuing early childhood education courses through higher education is not having money to pay for tuition. There needs to be funding for Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program, whose purpose is to support the early learning workforce by providing financial assistance upfront to eligible individuals taking coursework in early childhood education. Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program was established through Act 210 in 2021 without an appropriation. SB 2701 seeks to fund the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Special Fund, which will be expended by the Executive Office on Early Learning for Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program.

Without support for these programs and the workforce, families will have fewer options for the care and education of their children. In UHERO's economic forecast for the state, economist Carl Bonham noted, "By making early childhood education accessible to more families, these programs will increase labor force participation, particularly among

women. They also represent an important investment in the development of the country's future human capital and in the fight against poverty". Growing quality, affordable programs won't happen without ensuring we have the workforce we need and our children deserve. I respectfully request the committee support working families and the dedicated early care and learning professionals by voting favorably on SB 2701



‘O kēia ‘ōlelo hō’ike no ke
Komikina Kūlana Olakino o Nā Wāhine

Testimony on behalf of the
Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women

Prepared for the S. Committees on Education and Human Services

In Support of SB2701

Dear Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura Vice Chairs, and Honorable Members,

The Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women writes in support of SB2701 which establishes and makes an appropriation for an early child care worker subsidy pilot program. The measure also makes an appropriation to the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special Fund.

SB2701 will tackle the worsening gender wage in Hawai‘i, disproportionate burden of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, and logistical nightmare of childcare in the State. This pilot compensation program is critical to stem high turnover and shortages in child care workers, who experience higher poverty rates than the general population. This will also provide knowledge on how to design long-term, sustainable childcare in the long-term.

Please pass SB2701.

Sincerely,

Khara Jabola-Carolus
Executive Director

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



JOHN S.S. KIM
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: SB2701 Relating to Early Education
DATE: February 9, 2022
TIME: 3:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education and Committee on Human Services
ROOM: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the Committees:

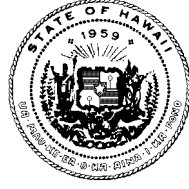
The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) offers COMMENTS on **SB2701** which establishes and makes an appropriation for an early child care worker subsidy pilot program.

On page 2, line 12 of the bill, it incorrectly states that the State public charter school commission employs early childhood educator. In fact, each individual public charter school with a pre-k classroom employs their own early childhood educator. We ask that the bill be amended on page 2, lines 10-12, as follows:

“Early childhood educators not be employed by the department of education, executive office on early learning, or [State] public charter schools [commission];

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 8, 2022

LATE

TO: The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senate Committee on Education

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2701 – RELATING TO EARLY EDUCATION.**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 9, 2022, 3:15 p.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill to expand the access of quality early child care and education in early childhood facilities for Hawaii's families, requests clarification, and provides comments. DHS defers to the Executive Office on Early Learning for relevant parts. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish and make an appropriation for an early child care worker subsidy pilot program. Makes an appropriation to the Hawaii early childhood educator special fund.

The Department respectfully requests clarification on the intent of the one-year worker subsidy program. As drafted, it is unclear whether the purpose of the worker subsidy is to: 1) increase professional development of the child care workforce, or 2) retain the existing early

child care workforce, or 3) both. In addition to clarifying the intent, DHS suggests adding language regarding evidence of professional development.

Given the continuing stress and impacts of the pandemic on the child care industry and that young children are still not eligible for vaccinations, and the fact that this appropriation will be for only one year, DHS respectfully suggests that the priority for the first year of the pilot be to provide subsidies to retain as many child care workers in the State as possible, and not restrict the cohort to rural or child care "deserts." The first year should focus on determining whether the first cohort used the subsidy to supplement their income or whether they used it to further their professional development. How funds will be equitably distributed geographically by lottery will also need to be determined.

Notably, DHS does not have subject matter expertise and purview regarding wages; DHS would defer to the private sector to help bring all early childhood educators' pay to, at a minimum, \$17.00 per hour as stated in section 2.

Additionally, the proposed section 2, subsection (b), indicates the minimum standards and qualifications for participation in the pilot program. It is challenging to develop a program when the total value is unknown; for example, we may know the total number of regulated child care facilities in the State, but we do not know the total number of child care workers to target 5% of them.

Additionally, to provide a subsidy for one year, the appropriation will have to be large enough to cover the cohort as well as administrative and operational costs; so, it may be prudent to set a target number of child care workers for the first year to calculate the subsidy amount that would be available for the first year. The subsidy would need to be substantial enough to make it worth applying.

If the measure passes as drafted, DHS respectfully requests that the effective date be set after or later than December 31, 2022, to give DHS the time to make the necessary program and system changes and develop administrative processes and rules. The Department's current program demands and efforts are focused on complying with provisions of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant, which provides approximately \$30 million annually in federal Child Care and Development Fund grants. Additionally, DHS is in the process of

distributing \$70 million in child care stabilization funds appropriated through the American Rescue Plan Act. As the session progresses, DHS will update the resources needed to implement the proposed program.

Lastly, we ask that any appropriation not supplant fiscal priorities identified in the Executive Budget.

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

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**

P.O. BOX 150

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2701

**February 9, 2022
3:15 p.m.
Room 229 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO EARLY EDUCATION

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2701: 1) establishes a Child Care Worker Subsidy Pilot Program within the Department of Human Services (DHS) for a period of one year; 2) sets applicant eligibility and selection requirements, a target for the percentage of early childhood educators to be served, and reporting and other requirements for DHS; 3) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds to DHS in FY 23 for the pilot program; and 4) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds to the Executive Office on Early Learning in FY 23 for the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Special Fund.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



Hawai'i
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawai'i's children

To:

Senator Kidani, Chair
Senator Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Ihara, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: **SB 2701, relating to early education**
3:15 PM, February 9, 2022

Chair Kidani, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Ihara, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 2701, relating to early education. We need bold efforts to stabilize the early care and learning workforce*. Piloting a compensation program and funding the Early Childhood Educator Stipend program help us keep our current qualified and dedicated workforce and builds the workforce for tomorrow.**

We need to prioritize maintaining our current child care workforce. This bill pilots a compensation program aimed to prevent child care workers from leaving the profession. Low compensation has been an on-going issue for early care and learning. Although the problem has been recognized, there has been no action to improve compensation. **The average hourly wage of a child care worker in Hawai'i is under \$13.** As a result, our early care and learning workforce is shrinking. Without the professionals in the programs, we will continue to see a reduction of spaces for children. The ripple effect in our community will be outstanding.

Supporting new early care and learning educators helps us grow the programs children and families need. The Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program (Act 210, 2021) supports recent graduates entering into the early care and learning profession. Educators are eligible for the education stipend if they provide early care and learning services to children between the ages of birth and five years old for at least two consecutive years. While the measure was passed last session, no appropriation was made. We cannot grow our programs if we have no one to work in them.

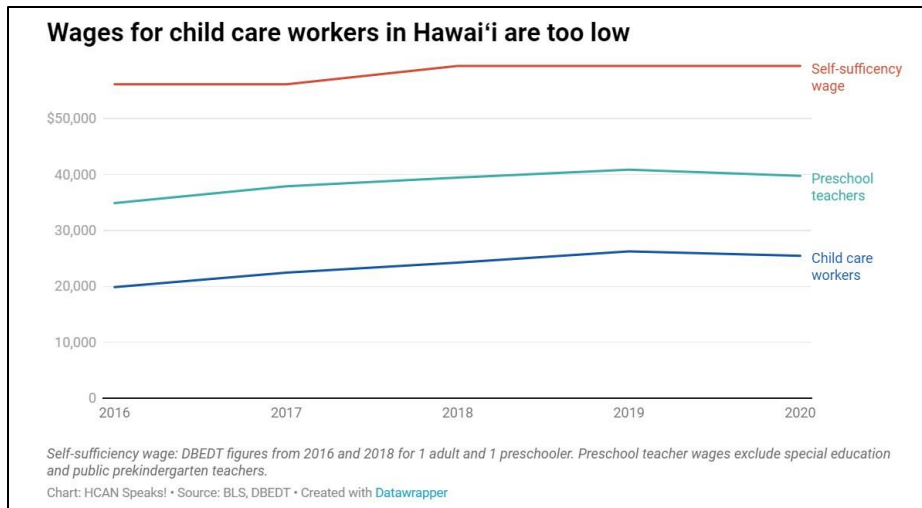
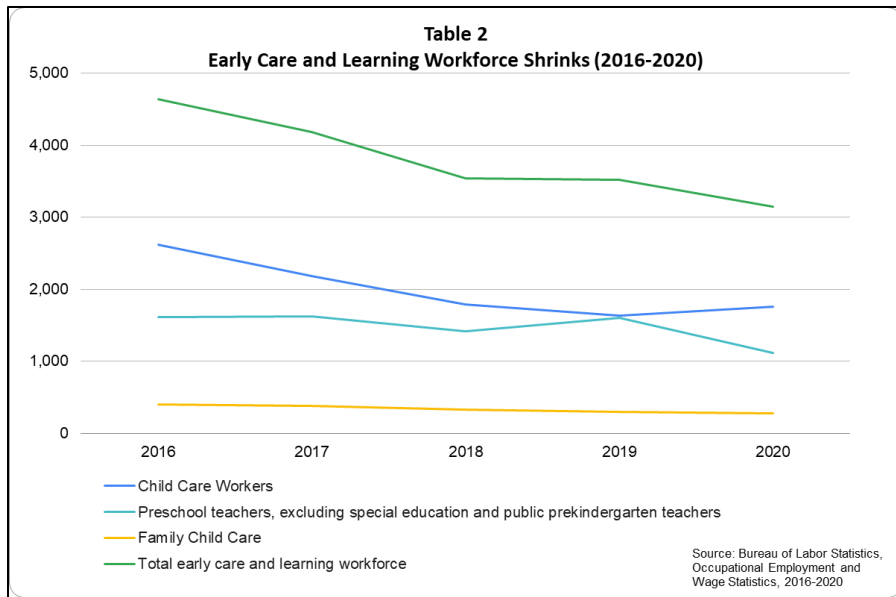
"Recruitment, development and retention of qualified child care staff remains problematic in most areas of the state. A major contributing factor is low compensation for teachers which deters interested and qualified individuals from entering or remaining in the child care profession. The high rate of turnover among child care staff negatively affects the consistency and quality of care provided to children."
Department of Human Services¹

Our shrinking workforce directly contributes to the loss of child care programs. While we've seen a reduction in the number of child care programs since the start of the pandemic, we've been in a steady decline for the last five years (Table 1). It is not a coincidence that we have also seen a reduction in the early care and learning workforce (Table 2). Demand remains high for early care and learning programs and parents are sometimes waiting months for a spot. But we can stop and reverse these trends. We can invest in our early care and learning workforce the same way we do for other public goods. Several states and the District of Columbia have launched initiatives to do this. Recently, Washington D.C passed a bill to give child care workers a one-time payment between \$10,000 and \$14,000. They also adopted a plan to raise wages permanently.¹

¹ dcist, February 2, 2022, "D.C. Child Care Workers To Get \$10,000 Checks As Part Of Pay-Raise Plan", <https://dcist.com/story/22/02/02/dc-child-care-worker-payment/>

Table 1	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Regulated Child Care Licensed Capacity	35,988	36,070	35,548	35,548	35,418
Number of Children Under Age 6 Needing Care	66,000	65,000	64,000	61,000	59,750

Sources: Kids Count, "Children under age 6 with all available parents in workforce"; Department of Human Services regulated child care licensed capacity



Child care programs cannot increase wages without increasing the costs to families. But for most families, child care is already too expensive.

* The terms 'early care and learning', 'early childhood educator', and 'child care worker' are used interchangeably.

In the fall, early care and learning professionals were asked what came to mind when they heard “Early childhood professionals deserve worthy wages for worthy work”, here are a few of their responses:

“ABSOLUTELY! They are doing the work with our youngest children whose brains are growing exponentially! Why are they getting paid so little when they have the MOST important work!”

“Like my dream come true, to get paid what I am worth”

“Employee retention is getting more difficult as the years go by.....Its so hard to give an employee the pay they deserve for all the hard work they do. Benefits such as retirement are unheard of!”

Let’s take the steps to support children, families, and our early care and learning professionals. Investing in the early childhood workforce is an investment in our children. For these reasons, HCAN Speaks! respectfully requests the Committee to support this measure.

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee On Education

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee On Human Resources

From: Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board

Subject: **Measure:** SB 2701, Relating to Early Learning
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 9, 2022
Time: 3:15 PM
Location: Conference Room 229 and videoconference

Description: Establishes and makes an appropriation for an early child care worker subsidy pilot program. Makes an appropriation to the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special Fund.

Early Learning Board Position: Support the Intent

Aloha. I am Robert G. Peters, Chair of the Early Learning Board (ELB). Thank you for this opportunity to support the intent of SB 2701.

The Early Learning Board (ELB) appreciates the Legislature's continued support of early learning, despite the challenges the State has had to face because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for your continued efforts to increase access to early care and education and the recognition that the need for quality early child care and education far exceeds the current State's capacity to deliver it. One of the critical capacity issues arises from the inadequacy of compensation for providers, who are challenged to afford Hawaii's cost of living. The median wage for child care workers is well below the living wage of \$20.61 calculated for a single adult in our State. This situation is a barrier to attracting and retaining quality providers and child care workers and accounts, in part, for the high early childhood educator turnover rate not only in Hawaii but across the nation.

Timing has prevented the ELB from discussing SB 2701 and its specific elements; it is on the agenda for the Board's February meeting. Supporting the bill's intent at this time is based upon the ELB annual priorities which include, "Supporting efforts to expand workforce capacity building" and support of the University of Hawaii's College of Education's effort to conduct a compensation study with recommendations about achieving equity with sustainable living wages for early educators.

The ELB is expected to support the following amendments recommended by EOEL in order for it to utilize the appropriation included in SB 2701 for its intended purpose:

- Section 1, line 14, subsection (2): "Make an appropriation to the ~~Hawaii early childhood educator~~ Early Learning special fund."
- Section 4, line 15: "There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the ~~Hawaii Early childhood educator~~ Early Learning Special Fund established pursuant to Section 302L-~~40-5~~."

Act 210, SLH 2021, established the Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program. This program, administered by EOEL in partnership with the University of Hawaii, currently leverages private source funding that would provide upfront financial support, covering early childhood tuition and fees, to individuals in the early care and education system. The Hawaii early childhood educator special fund, to be administered by EOEL, shall have moneys received by the office pursuant to section 302L-9(e), which refer to stipend funds repaid by a stipend recipient. Furthermore, this special fund shall be abolished and repealed on June 30, 2023. Appropriating funds to the Early Learning Special Fund instead would allow EOEL to utilize the appropriations for its intended purpose and provide sustainability and continuity to the program.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer this testimony supportive of the intent of SB 2701.

LATE



Testimony in Support of SB 2701

Aloha Chair Senator San Buenaventura, Chair Senator Kidani, Vice Chair Senator Ihari , Vice Chair Kim and honorable committees members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2701, relating to early education. This bill seeks to help retain and recruit early childhood educators. We need to make investments in our early childhood workforce to support children, our working families, and our state.

Early care and learning programs are the cornerstones of our communities. They support our youngest learners and our working families. But they are facing a crisis. Low-compensation has forced dedicated professionals to leave the field and prevented others from joining. Three key facts about the child care in Hawai'i are:

- **\$12.43** The median wage of a child care worker in Hawai'i
- **16%** The percent of child care workers in poverty in the state
- **35,000** The estimated number of child care spaces we need to serve all children needing care

Without support for these programs and the workforce, families will have fewer options for the care and education of their children. In UHERO's economic forecast for the state, economist Carl Bonham noted, "By making early childhood education accessible to more families, these programs will increase labor force participation, particularly among women. They also represent an important investment in the development of the country's future human capital and in the fight against poverty". Growing quality, affordable programs won't happen without ensuring we have the workforce we need and our children deserve. I respectfully request the committee support working families and the dedicated early care and learning professionals by voting favorably on SB 2701.

Mahalo,
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii



To: Senate Committee on Education and Senate Committee on Human Services
Hearing Date/Time: February 9th, 2022 3:15PM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 229 & Video Conference
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT/SUPPORT of SB2701

Dear Chair Kidani, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Kim, Vice Chair Ihara, and the Members of Committees,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2701 which would create a pilot wage subsidy program and appropriate funding into the Early Childhood Educator Stipend program to retain and recruit childcare educators.

In 2020, Hawaii had an estimated 59,000 children under 6 needing care and only 24,000 spaces in licensed & regulated programs. The median wage of childcare educators in Hawaii is \$12.43 and many leave for a better paying job. The living wage in Hawaii is \$19. We simply need to pay the childcare educators better. The childcare programs rely on tuition to stay open and that cost is already way too high for most of the families in Hawaii.

Women shoulder a disproportionate burden of child care responsibilities: about 27% of mothers stay at home (versus 7% fathers), three fourth of the mothers who stay at home do so to care for family (versus one fourth of the fathers) according to a 2018 survey from Pew Research. Being forced to leave the labor force to do unpaid care work limits women's advancement and corresponding pay increases, contributing to the gender pay gap. On average, women spend 12 years less in the workforce than men. The gender pay gap also continues into retirement, with the 2019 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey showing a nearly 30% difference in total retirement income between men and women. There are serious and disproportionate financial barriers to seniors aging in place and avoiding institutionalization.

By increasing the number of childcare spaces by raising the wage of childcare educators while keeping the licensed child care programs affordable, SB2701 allows mothers to remain in the workforce. SB2701 allows mothers a chance for better pay for themselves and their family, and for better retirement income and savings.



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, Kua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. UH Hilo, UH Manoa, UH Maui College, and Windward Community College are also AAUW partners. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership.

Please pass this important measure.

with Aloha,
Younghee Overly

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Y. Overly", is positioned below the typed name.

Public Policy Chair, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net



Date: February 7, 2022

To: Senate Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for SB2701, Relating to Early Education

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 strongly supports passage of SB2701, which would 1) establish and fund a child care worker subsidy pilot program and 2) make an appropriation to the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special Fund.

High-quality child care and early learning programs are fundamental to thriving children, flourishing families, and a robust economy. An effective, well-trained, early childhood workforce is the backbone of these programs. This workforce, however, suffers from chronically low wages and turnover.

According to the 2020 National Early Childhood Workforce Index (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment) there are an estimated 3,410 members of the early childhood teaching workforce providing services to Hawai'i's children. The median hourly wage for child care workers in Hawaii is \$12.43 and the poverty rate for early educators in Hawaii is 16.3%, much higher than the poverty rate for Hawaii workers in general (6.1%) and 4.5 times as high as for K-8 teachers (3.6%). Studies nationally estimate annual turnover rates between 26-40% for early childhood educators in licensed child care facilities.

The pandemic has only exacerbated the problem, with the risks and burdens of COVID-19 making it all the more difficult to both retain child care professionals and replace those who leave. As of September, 2021, the child care industry, nationally, was down 126,700 workers, more than a 10% decline from pre-pandemic levels and was facing one of the most dire of hiring situations across employment sectors.

The wage supplements and education stipends supported by SB2701 are a critical measure designed to aid in the recruitment, education, and retention of the early care and learning workforce. Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have used child care compensation programs to address the high rates of turnover and critical shortage in the workforce, and increasing compensation has been cited as the #1 way to increase retention and recruitment for child care and early learning in Hawai'i.

In order for Hawai'i to rebuild from the pandemic and meet the education, employment, and economic needs of the state, the state must support and sustain the child care sector and improve families' access to child care and early learning programs by prioritizing strategies, such as those in SB2701, to stabilize and expand the early childhood workforce.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov
February 9, 2022

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Sara Alimoot
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Ms. Mary Brogan
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Ms. Shana Cruz
Mr. Mark Disher
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Dr. Kurt Humphrey
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Ms. Tina King
Ms. Jennifer Leoiki-Drino
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
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Ms. Kiele Pennington
Ms. Carrie Pisciotto
Ms. Kau'i Rezentes
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Ms. Ivalee Sinclair
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Paula Whitaker
Ms. Jasmine Williams
Ms. Susan Wood

Ms. Annie Kalama, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Ms. Wendy Nakasone-Kalani,
*liaison to the military
community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Committee on Education
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 2701 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

Dear Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura and Committee Members,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **supports the intent** of SB 2701 which makes an appropriation to the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special Fund for SY 2022-23. This fund was established last year as a source of stipends to early educators to enable them to receive coursework in early education through the University of Hawaii.

Numerous research studies have shown the long term benefits of quality early childhood education programs for students with and without disabilities, including higher high school graduation rates, lower grade retention and drop out rates, and greater social and emotional maturity. There is also ample evidence that access to quality preschool programming can lessen referrals for special education services by providing prevention and early intervention strategies to meet students' diverse needs.

Additionally, high quality preschool teachers are better prepared to accommodate children with IEPs in inclusive classrooms. By creating a larger pool of these teachers through the stipend program, we are potentially increasing the availability of inclusive placements.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony. If you have any questions, we are happy to answer them.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair

Ivalee Sinclair
Legislative Committee Chair

Feb. 8, 2022

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Education

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services,

From: Dr. Terry Lock, Director,
Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Education

Subject: Measure - SB 2701: RELATING TO EARLY EDUCATION.
Hearing Date - February 9, 2022
Time - 3:15 pm
Location: Room 309 and videoconference

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. I am with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Education and currently serve as the director of the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project. This project's goal is to transform early childhood education lead teacher preparation programs and compensation/ financing systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly support the intent of SB 2701. This bill seeks to help retain and recruit early childhood educators. We need to make investments in our early childhood workforce to support young children, our working families, and our state.

Research has shown that a diverse well-prepared, well-supported, and well-compensated workforce is essential for the delivery of high-quality early childhood programs (Institute of Medicine, 2015). Early care and learning programs are the cornerstones of our communities in Hawai'i. They support our youngest learners and our working families. But for decades, they have been facing a crisis that is only getting worse. Low-compensation has forced dedicated professionals, especially those working in community-based and home-based programs, to leave the field and this has prevented others from joining.

Three key facts about the child care in Hawai'i are: 1) \$12.43 is the median wage of a child care worker; 2) 16% is the percent of child care workers who live in poverty; and 3) 35,000 is the estimated number of child care spaces we need to serve all children needing care

SB 2701 seeks to create a pilot wage subsidy program for child care workers. I strong support this and recommend that this pilot wage subsidy program develop an equitable wage scale for our early childhood educators in our state. I also recommend that this program prioritizes those

who work with infants and toddlers in home-based and center-based programs. Highly skilled and knowledgeable infant and toddler caregivers are in high demand and often overlooked as states, like ours plan to expand to serve more four and three-year old children and their families. In addition, this wage subsidy pilot should implement a direct-to- educator supplemental payment, improve salary and benefits, and promote completion of associate and bachelor degrees in early childhood education.

Related to this, a common barrier to recruiting and retaining students who are pursuing early childhood education degrees in higher education is not having money to pay for tuition. Therefore, there needs to be funding for Hawai'i's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program, whose purpose is to support the early learning workforce by providing financial assistance upfront to eligible individuals taking coursework in early childhood education. Hawai'i's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program was established through Act 210 in 2021 without appropriation.

My recommendation is to fund Hawai'i's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program through Hawai'i Early Learning Special Fund rather than the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Special Fund, that is stated in SB 2701. This is because the Early Childhood Educator Special Fund is intended for recouped payments only and therefore, funds appropriated to this special fund would not be able to be utilized in the way the bill indicates. If it is appropriated to the Hawai'i Early Learning Special Fund, it could be. Then from this Early Learning Special Fund the appropriation will be expended by the Executive Office on Early Learning for Hawai'i's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program.

Without support for these programs and the workforce, families will have fewer options for the care and education of their children. Growing quality, affordable programs won't happen without ensuring we have the workforce we need and our children deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support for the intent of SB 2701.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Terry Lock

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 4:49:55 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tamara Swift	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I and my daughter have suffered through difficult to find and expensive child care which unfairly burdens particularly single Moms. All aspects of mothering should be supported by society and not penalized. Quality and low cost or free child care is a basic right of mothers and helps children develop to their full potetial.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 10:09:55 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jo-Ann M Adams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Studies have shown that investments in early childhood education have tangible benefits to the society over the long term.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 6:54:46 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, the Committee on Education, Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara and the Committee on Human Services,

I support SB 2701.

There is shortage of affordable child care. Our local governments need to make the initiative to support our early care and learning workforce. It is in the interest of our state's future to invest in early child care. Without this investment, many of our youth will fall behind and be unable to keep up with their peers who have more family resources thus expanding the wealth gap.

Please support SB 2701.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2701.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:05:29 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kenisha Strong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Supporting childcare providers in the development of our youngest citizens is paramount to the strength and growth of our world. This is one of the most important and valuable professions, and we should treat it as such. Childcare providers deserve more and we as parents of young children deserve more too.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:57:01 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Alice Luck	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill. In order to address the issues in the child care industry and increase access and quality, we need to support it as a small business, ensure that it is sustainable for owners as well as support sustainability for child care workers. Given what we now know about early brain development and school readiness, child care workers are vastly underpaid and we will never attract or retain the kind of quality workforce we need to care for our children with the current pay rates.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:05:47 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Gerraine Hignite	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

When working families don't have child care, it doesn't just affect them — it has ripple effects throughout our entire community and economy. [Senate Bill 2701](#) recognizes this is a problem affecting our entire state, and aims to solve it by using public funds to start increasing wages for child care workers.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:44:03 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Our children are our future. Don't "short change" them.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 1:24:29 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ileana Haunani Ruelas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill.

This reform is desperately needed to:

- increase salary for early learning educators to provide livable wages
- address the critical shortfall of Early Learning educators in the state of hawaii
- provide much needed classroom availability for families struggling with early learning education needs
- reduce the level of stress/mental health challenges experienced for both families with young children and educators of young children

I would also advocate that:

- Timeline needs to be lengthened for the pilot to allow for reasonable analysis. One year turnaround is too short, 3-5 years are more realistic.
- 5% of current educators in Preschool Education/Early Learning is a very small number - it should be expanded to be at least 25%-35% of educators.
- The plan should be paired with a 3, 5,10 year plan to address the serious shortfalls in employment for early learning educators.

Important background information:

According to [Child Care Services, April 2021](#):

- A child’s earliest years are a critical window of brain development. Early learning opportunities with a high-quality workforce lay the foundation for future success in school and in life.
- Yet, child care teachers, overwhelmingly women and primarily women of color, earn an average of just \$12/hour—less than \$25,000/year—even with a degree.
- Nearly 40% of child care educators rely on some form of public assistance because of their unlivable wages; they are seven times more likely to live in poverty than public school kindergarten teachers.
- Teachers working with infants and toddlers earn the least, regardless of educational level. This wage gap disproportionately affects people of color, who are more likely to work with younger age groups.

- Young children depend on stable, secure relationships and continuity of care to support their development.
- But with low pay and few benefits, turnover is high and 22% of teachers expect to leave the field within the next three years.
- Some work multiple jobs just to stay afloat and still be in the field they love.

According to the ALICE Report 2020 for Hawaii:

- The hourly wages needed to support budgets are \$15.53 for the single adult Survival Budget; \$17.15 for the Senior Survival Budget; and \$45.41 for one worker or \$22.70 each for two workers for the Survival Budget for a family of four. To put these budgets in perspective, the median hourly wage for the most common occupation in Hawai‘i, retail sales, was \$13.03 in 2018, or \$26,060 if full time, year-round — not enough to support any of the ALICE budgets.¹¹

According to [Star Advertiser](#):

- Even before the pandemic, Hawaii’s state-funded preschool served just a tiny fraction of the population — 679 students, or an estimated 4% of the state’s 4-year-olds — in the 2019-2020 school year, according to the [2020 State of Preschool Yearbook](#) issued by the National Institute for Early Education Research.
- The Executive Office on Early Learning was established in 2015 to create the public prekindergarten program and coordinate early childhood learning statewide. It now has 37 prekindergarten classrooms at 34 public schools statewide, out of a total of 174 Department of Education elementary schools.

According to [HI-CAN](#):

- 28% of Hawaii's Households with children lost employment income in the past 4 weeks
- 24% of Hawaii's households with children have little or no confidence in their ability to pay their next rent or mortgage on time
- 15% of Hawaii's households with children sometimes or often did not have enough food to eat in the past week
- 28% of Hawaii adults living in households with children - felt down, depressed or hopeless most days or nearly every day for the past week.
- 19% applied for but did not receive Unemployment Insurance benefits

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 1:25:31 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Erika Vargas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We are a two-income household with full-time jobs. We both have Masters Degrees. We 2 children and a mortgage. One child is in preschool and we cannot afford childcare for the second child. We take turns working from home, which has only been possible now due to the pandemic. We live paycheck to paycheck. It is stressfull trying to work at home while taking care of an infant. It is stressful hoping that we have enough money each month to pay for the one preschool. We need universal preschool and private preschools needs subsidies to afford to pay teachers and keep the costs low for families. The reality is that not everyone qualifies for Head Start and even if all families were eligible for Head Start, the program would not be able to service all children which steers families towards finding private preschools which currently cost anywhere from \$800-\$2000 a month. We need sustainable solutions that support local families.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 1:39:13 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Liza Ryan Gill	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear members of the committee,

I'm writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2701. Hawai'i needs to support the working families that make this state run by supporting childcare.

I recently had my first child and was planning to return to work fulltime after 3-4 months of maternity leave. Unfortunately, when we went to look for a daycare spot for our child there were none available at any price. The wait lines were over ten families long and many were not accepting babies under 12months old. Finally we found a spot for APRIL. Our baby will be 13 months old by the time she goes into daycare. In order for me to go back to work we have been juggling childcare between grandparents that are still working, my husband who is working fulltime, and myself. It is extremely stressful. We love having more time with our child but if I didn't have a job that I could do from home or extra family living here there would be no way for me to work at all. This lack of affordable and reliable childcare keeps working moms and dads out of the economy and hurts our families, at a time when housing and food costs have increased dramatically. Childcare workers deserve to be paid a living wage for the hard work that they do caring for our keiki and families deserve the ability to find childcare that they can afford. The legislature needs to take action on this issue and **SUPPORT SB2701**.

Mahalo,

Liza Ryan Gill

Working mom/Honolulu

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 3:22:29 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Linda Rich	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hearing Related to SB2701

Committee on Education

Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair, Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Committee on Human Services

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair; Senator Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair

My name is Linda Rich and I am testifying in support of SB2701.

I am a retired social worker with four decades of working in and administering human services programs. Most of my employees were women and most of the clients I served were women. Lack of safe accessible childcare is by far the greatest barrier to working women and women attempting to improve their situations through treatment services, higher education or job training. There are indeed child care deserts. There is also a lack of well trained caregivers able to provide the developmental support, safety and nurture needed by young children.

SB2701 provides an avenue to begin to address this great need in our community and I urge you to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SN2701.

Linda Rich

To: Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Ihara, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Senator Kidani, Chair
Senator Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

Re: SB 2701 Relating to Early Education
3:15 PM, February 9, 2022

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Ihara, Vice Chair Kim, and committee members,

I am writing in support of SB 2701 relating to early education.

14 years ago, I dropped off my 4 year old at the local university preschool and walked next door to begin my own shift in the toddler classroom. Working at a child care center where your child was also a student helped this single parent graduate from college while working. After working a 9 hour shift, we would catch the bus home, I would prep dinner, play with her, then put her to bed. At night I worked another few hours in my second job in writing preschool curriculum activities. Weekends as a child care worker meant spending most of my time at my classroom cleaning, prepping, and creating materials for my children to learn. This was not a sustainable model for me, to work two jobs and care for a young child, so eventually I left the field of early childhood education for the Department of Education where they paid 25% more for my same degree I used in early childcare. Currently, the median hourly wage for child care workers stands at \$12.43/hour¹. I felt defeated and dishonored as I have the passion for early childhood learning and teaching. However, that passion could not pay my bills. So I, like many of my friends in the field, left for other jobs that paid more.

Early childhood providers and child care workers are some of most selfless, knowledgeable people I know. They can calm a crying child in minutes with redirection, song and music. They can speak with authority to parents about child development and sleepless nights while reassuring parents that this is just a phase. Child care workers often take classes or earn their degrees to learn this knowledge and pedagogy, which is where the power to profession lies. Investing in the early childhood profession means better outcomes for children and families.² It means that supporting the wage increase for workers to keep quality educators in the workforce. It means being valued and respected as a contributing member of society and to be compensated as such.

I urge you to pass this bill to support the dignity of my profession.

Sincerely,
Mai Hall

¹ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2021) The Early Childhood Educator Workforce, <https://csce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/the-early-educator-workforce/early-educatorpay-economic-insecurity-across-the-states/>

² NAEYC. Power to the Profession Overview. <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/initiatives/profession/overview>

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 4:17:07 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Judith Wilhoite	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

"Rich countries contribute an average of \$14,000 per year for a toddler's care, compared with \$500 in the U.S." NYT 02/07/2022 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/upshot/child-care-biden.html?smid=url-share>

We need to catch up with the rest of the world. This bill is a good way to start.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 4:51:28 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mareva Minerbi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 5:51:10 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kealakai Hammond	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2701, relating to early education. This bill seeks to help retain and recruit early childhood educators. We need to make investments in our early childhood workforce to support children, our working families, and our state.

Early care and learning programs are the cornerstones of our communities. They support our youngest learners and our working families. But they are facing a crisis. Low-compensation has forced dedicated professionals to leave the field and prevented others from joining. Three key facts about the child care in Hawai‘i are:

- \$12.43 The median wage of a child care worker in Hawai‘i
- 16% The percent of child care workers in poverty in the state
- 35,000 The estimated number of child care spaces we need to serve all children needing care

Without support for these programs and the workforce, families will have fewer options for the care and education of their children. In UHERO’s economic forecast for the state, economist Carl Bonham noted, “By making early childhood education accessible to more families, these programs will increase labor force participation, particularly among women. They also represent an important investment in the development of the country’s future human capital and in the fight against poverty”. Growing quality, affordable programs won’t happen without ensuring we have the workforce we need and our children deserve. I respectfully request the committee support working families and the dedicated early care and learning professionals by voting favorably on SB 2701.

Thank you,

Kealakai Hammond

February 8, 2022

I sincerely appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony for Senate Bill 2701 related to early education. This bill seeks to help retain and recruit early childhood educators. We need to make investments in our early childhood workforce to support children, our working families, and our state. The early childhood education can better prepare the State's early childhood workforce to interact with young children (aged 0-5), whose brain development is critical for long-term learning and success individually which in turns have implications to the society and the country. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children 2021 annual report, the benefits of investing in high quality early childhood education are clear and extensive—for children, adults, and society at large, which is with a return on investment of up to 13% and a contribution of \$163 billion to the US gross domestic product. A substantial research base confirms that when children participate in highly quality early childhood education, they are: 1) More likely to experience improved cognitive and social outcomes; 2) More likely to graduate from high schools; 3) Less likely to require remedial education; 4) Less likely to commit crimes; 5) Less likely to be neglected and abused; 6) Less likely to be unemployed; and 7) Less likely to require public assistance.

Early care and learning programs are the cornerstones of our communities. They support our youngest learners and our working families. But they are facing a crisis. Low-compensation has forced dedicated professionals to leave the field and prevented others from joining. Three key facts about the child care in Hawai'i are:

- **\$12.43** The median wage of a child care worker in Hawai'i
- **16%** The percent of child care workers in poverty in the state
- **35,000** The estimated number of child care spaces we need to serve all children needing care

In addition, a common barrier to recruiting and retaining students who are pursuing early childhood education courses through higher education is not having money to pay for tuition. There needs to be funding for Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program, whose purpose is to support the early learning workforce by providing financial assistance upfront to eligible individuals taking coursework in early childhood education. Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program was established through Act 210 in 2021 without an appropriation. SB 2701 seeks to fund the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special Fund, which will be expended by the Executive Office on Early Learning for Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program.

Without support for these programs and the workforce, families will have fewer options for the care and education of their children. In UHERO's economic forecast for the state, economist Carl Bonham noted, "By making early childhood education accessible to more families, these programs will increase labor force participation, particularly among women. They also represent an important investment in the development of the country's future human capital and in the fight against poverty". Growing quality, affordable programs won't happen without ensuring we have the workforce we need and our children deserve. I sincerely appreciate the Committee's time and consideration of my testimony. Please vote in support of this vital Senate Bill 2701 that would change the future and scenery of the early childhood education in the State of Hawaii.

Respectfully,

Helen Au, Ph.D., M.Ed.

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 9:12:07 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Bethany Stetson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

As a working mother in Hawaii with a young child, I support SB2701. We must steward the lives and futures of our keiki well, and that can only be done by ensuring that safe, competent child care workers are employed and being paid a livable wage. Too often, lack of choices and resources for child care places families in difficult situations where they may have to sacrifice safety and quality in order to remain employed. No parent should need to make that decision. Thank you for your time.

Bethany Stetson

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 9:14:17 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Toni Fujimoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2701, relating to early education. This bill seeks to help retain and recruit early childhood educators. We need to make investments in our early childhood workforce to support children, our working families, and our state.

Early care and learning programs are the cornerstones of our communities. They support our youngest learners and our working families. But they are facing a crisis. Low-compensation has forced dedicated professionals to leave the field and prevented others from joining. Three key facts about the child care in Hawai'i are:

- \$12.43 The median wage of a child care worker in Hawai'i**
- 16% The percent of child care workers in poverty in the state**
- 35,000 The estimated number of child care spaces we need to serve all children needing care**

Hawaii needs to recruit and retain students who are passionate about early childhood. There needs to be funding for Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program, whose purpose is to support the early learning workforce by providing financial assistance upfront to eligible individuals taking coursework in early childhood education. Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program was established through Act 210 in 2021 without an appropriation. SB 2701 seeks to fund the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special Fund, which will be expended by the Executive Office on Early Learning for Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program.

Without support for these programs and the workforce, families will have fewer options for the care and education of their children. In UHERO's economic forecast for the state,

economist Carl Bonham noted, “By making early childhood education accessible to more families, these programs will increase labor force participation, particularly among women. They also represent an important investment in the development of the country’s future human capital and in the fight against poverty”. Growing quality, affordable programs won’t happen without ensuring we have the workforce we need and our children deserve. I respectfully request the committee support working families and the dedicated early care and learning professionals by voting favorably on SB 2701.

Thank you,

To: Honorable Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura
Vice Chairs Kim and Ihara
Committee Members Dela Cruz, Fevella, Kanuha, Acasio and Misalucha

From: Dana Senaha, Parent, Early Childhood Educator and Hawaii Children's Action Network Board Member

Subject: Measure: SB 2701 - Relating to Early Education

Date: February 9, 2022

Time: 3:15 pm

Location: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Aloha,

My name is Dana Senaha and I am respectfully submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2701.

I am a parent of two children ages four and seven; a former preschool teacher; a parent volunteer at my children's schools; a board member of Hawaii Children's Action Network and a family researcher at the University of Hawai'i Center on the Family. I am submitting this testimony as an individual citizen and do not speak on behalf of my employer.

SB 2701 seeks to help retain and recruit early childhood educators. We need to make investments in our early childhood workforce to support children, our working families, and our state. Early care and learning programs are the cornerstones of our communities. They support our youngest learners and our working families. But they are facing a crisis. Low compensation has forced dedicated professionals to leave the field and prevented others from joining.

I can speak personally to this problem. In 2004, I returned home to Hawaii with a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Vanderbilt University and ABD (All But Dissertation in a PhD program) in the same program. My salary as a lead teacher and administrator at a private preschool in Honolulu was less than \$30,000/year with restricted benefits. Understandably, I was not able to continue in that position and afford to live in Hawaii. Like so many teachers, economic realities led me to leave that position for an entry level marketing assistant position at a 20% higher salary, full benefits and employer paid training with guaranteed career advancement after the first year. Thankfully, I was able to secure a teaching position with Kamehameha Schools (KS), probably the only private program with the means to competitively compensate their early childhood staff. Because KS was able to offer me a salary on par with its K-12 teaching staff, I was able to return to the classroom where I taught for the next 9 years. It is an opportunity few in the field can access and a privilege I remain deeply grateful for.

The statistics regarding early childhood teacher compensation are unconscionable. The median wage for childcare workers in Hawaii is \$12.43 (Child Care Employment, Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020). My teenaged babysitter charges more per hour simply for watching my children while they

sleep! A full 16% of childcare workers are in poverty, compared to 10% of the general population in Hawai'i (Child Care Employment, Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020) and nationally 1 in 3 childcare workers experienced food insecurity in 2020 (Center for Early Childhood Innovation, Food insecurity in a nationally representative sample of childcare workers). Our youngest keiki who are able to attend preschool, spend 8 – 10 hours each day in the care of early education teachers and staff, who not only educate them, but provide love, nurturing and guidance. *These teachers deserve better and are worth so much more than what they are paid.*

The pandemic has made one thing obvious, there is no economic recovery without early care and education. For parents to return to work, the must know that their children are safe and well cared for. Yet, Hawai'i has too many families needing early care and learning and not enough spaces. In 2020, Hawai'i had an estimated 59,000 kids under 6 needing care and only 24,000 spaces in licensed/regulated programs. Adding to the problem of childcare shortage, the cost of care that is available is too expensive for families. The average family of 4 spends around 26% of their income on childcare for an infant and a 4-year-old in Hawai'i. Research has shown over decades that investments in high quality Early Childhood Education reap substantial benefits, with cost benefit estimates that range from \$4 to over \$15 for every dollar spent (Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Kentucky, Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Education).

Our childcare system is broken. Families can't afford to pay and childcare educators can't afford to stay. Programs rely on childcare tuition to stay open and that cost is too high for families to shoulder alone. We need public investment to fund a system that works for children, families, and teachers. In UHERO's economic forecast for the state, economist Carl Bonham noted, "By making early childhood education accessible to more families, these programs will increase labor force participation, particularly among women. They also represent an important investment in the development of the country's future human capital and in the fight against poverty". Growing quality, affordable programs won't happen without ensuring we have the workforce we need and our children deserve. I respectfully request the committee support working families and the dedicated early care and learning professionals by voting favorably on SB 2701.

Thank you,

Dana Senaha, EdD

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 3:09:07 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Justina Acevedo-Cross	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2701, relating to early education. This bill seeks to help retain and recruit early childhood educators. We need to make investments in our early childhood workforce to support children, our working families, and our state. I personally see the struggles that a under-compensated early care and learning workforce faces. I am a parent of a three year old in preschool and his school has faced staffing shortages; recently the lead teacher resigned from her position. In turn that created havoc as a parent because the center needed to temporarily reduce the hours of preschool drop off and pick up because they were short staffed. I firmly believe if educators in all care and learning settings are valued and compensated as they are in other professions for their knowledge and skills, the early care and learning sector would not be having a deeply felt retention problem.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown light on how early care and learning programs support our youngest learners and our working families. Low-compensation has forced dedicated professionals to leave the field and prevented others from joining. Three key facts about the child care in Hawai'i are:

- \$12.43 The median wage of a child care worker in Hawai'i**
- 16% The percent of child care workers in poverty in the state**
- 35,000 The estimated number of child care spaces we need to serve all children needing care**

In addition, a common barrier to recruiting and retaining students who are pursuing early childhood education courses through higher education is not having money to pay for tuition. There needs to be funding for Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program, whose purpose is to support the early learning workforce by providing financial assistance upfront to eligible individuals taking coursework. Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program was established through Act 210 in 2021 without an appropriation. SB 2701 seeks to fund the Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Special Fund, which will be expended by the Executive Office on Early Learning for Hawaii's Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program.

I request that the committee advances this measure to show support for working families and take action to support a much needed staffing recruitment and retention.

Sincerely,

Justina Acevedo-Cross

LATE

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 3:20:07 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Barbara DeBaryshe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Kidani and San Buenaventura, and members of the Education and Human Services Committees:

I am writing in **strong support of SB2701**.

As is the case across the nation, early childhood educators (ECE) in Hawai'i are underpaid and under-recognized professionals entrusted with providing young keiki with a safe, enriching, and responsive care. This especially the case for providers who care for our infants and toddlers.

We have a shortage of ECE staff, a situation that will quickly become apparent to all as the states moves to implementing Act 46 to provide universal preK access for three- and four-year-olds. Turnover rates among existing staff are unacceptably high. This unfortunate situation is a sign of worker stress and also takes a toll on the emotional well-being of young children, who need consistent caretakers.

Until staff can earn a living wage, Hawai'i will not have a sufficiently large, qualified, and stable ECE workforce. Simply put, high-quality childcare cannot be provided on the basis of parent fees alone.

This pilot program is a step in the right direction. I urge you to pass this measure and include sufficient funding allow for success. I also respectfully suggest that you consider the timeline; one year seems too short to start up a program, recruit and fund applicants, and see actual results such as improved retention, job satisfaction, and pursuit of higher credentials, all of which should later translate into better quality.

I also applaud the focus on private ECE programs serving childcare deserts and rural areas. There will be no shortage of eligible providers. My own research shows that 63% of children live in childcare deserts (defined as areas with more than three children per ECE seat within a five-mile drive from home) and an additional 4% of children have no nearby ECE providers. For more information on our ECE landscape, please see <https://sites.google.com/hawaii.edu/ecemappingupdated2021-08/home>

Please note that although I am a public employee I do not speak on behalf of my employer.

Thank you for this chance to submit testimony. Thank you for supporting those who care for our young children.

LATE

SB-2701

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 7:23:05 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/9/2022 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nikki-Ann Yee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB2701. Our child care system is broken. Families can't afford to pay and child care educators can't afford to stay. Programs rely on child care tuition to stay open and that cost is too high for local families to shoulder alone when the average family of four spends around 26% of their income on child care. We need public investment to fund a system that works for children, families, and teachers. This bill takes strides to address these early care and learning workforce issues.

Mahalo for hearing this bill and I urge you to pass it.

Sincerely,

Nikki-Ann Yee