



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

April 3, 2023

**TO:** Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

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

**SUBJECT: Measure:** S.B. No. 329 S.D. 2 H.D. 2 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION  
**Hearing Date:** Tuesday, April 4, 2023  
**Time:** 3:00 pm  
**Location:** Conference Room 308

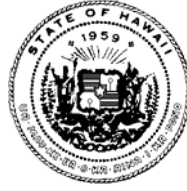
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support**

EOEL supports S.B. No. 239 S.D. 2 H.D. 2 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding implementation.

Accreditation is one well-known measure of quality in early childhood education programming. However, obtaining accreditation can be costly and time-consuming for providers, many who are still recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Establishing this program with adequate appropriations would help support more providers in achieving and maintaining accreditation.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature to support high-quality early learning programs and services in the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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

April 3, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 239 SD2 HD2 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION.**

Hearing: Tuesday, April 4, 2023, 3:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the bill, provides comments, requests clarification, and suggests clarifying amendments. DHS also requests an extended effective date. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation in this measure not replace or adversely impact priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill requires the Department of Human Services to establish a child care accreditation program to assist licensed and registered child care providers obtain accreditation. Authorizes the use of the child care grant program special fund for child care accreditation program grants. Amends the time period for when existing preschool open doors service providers are required to obtain accreditation and includes the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools to the list of accrediting organizations. Appropriates funds for the child care accreditation program, including one full-time position for the program. Appropriates funds into and out of the child care grant special fund. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD2).

The SD1 amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Child Care Accreditation Program shall be established within the Department of Human Services' Child Care Subsidy Program Office;
- (2) Expanding the accrediting entity to organizations approved by the Director of Human Services;
- (3) Inserting a definition for "eligible child care provider" to mean a child care facility that is not part of or owned or operated by a private educational institution; provided that an organization or individual that owns or operates both a private educational institution and a child care facility may be deemed an "eligible child care provider" if the organization or individual can provide evidence that the operations and finances of the private educational institution are completely separate from the operations and finances of the child care facility so that it is clear that a child care grant would not support or benefit the private educational institution in violation of article X, section 1 of the Hawaii State Constitution;
- (4) Allowing the funds appropriated for the Child Care Accreditation Program to be used to fund the annual accreditation fees incurred by eligible child care providers participating in the Preschool Open Doors program; inserting language establishing standards for the distribution of the funds appropriated in this measure as grants under the child care accreditation program;
- (5) Amending section 1 to reflect its amended purpose;
- (6) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The SD2 further amended the measure by:

- (1) Authorizing the Child Care Accreditation Program to award grant funding to a child care provider that has committed to obtaining accreditation from an accrediting organization approved by the Director of Human Services;
- (2) Adding a new section to appropriate funds out of the child care grant program special fund for the purposes of the child care grant program; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The HD1 amended the measure by:

- (1) Clarifying the circumstances in which an individual or organization that owns or operates both a private educational institution and child care facility may apply for a child care accreditation program grant;
- (2) Amending the child care grant program special fund to allow for the use of the fund to award child care accreditation program grants;

- (3) Changing the time frame by which an existing POD service provider must begin and complete the accreditation process to an unspecified date;
- (4) Appropriating an unspecified amount of funds out of the child care grant program special fund for child care accreditation program grants;
- (5) Changing the effective date to June 30, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (6) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The HD2 further amended the measure by:

- (1) Including the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools as an authorized accrediting organization for the Preschool Open Doors Program; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style. Clarifying the circumstances in which an individual or organization that owns or operates both a private educational institution and child care facility may apply for a child care accreditation program grant;

The Department supports family choice and currently offers higher child care subsidy payment rates to families that choose child care providers accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), and National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation (NAFCC). In addition, higher subsidies are available for the Preschool Open Doors program and the federally funded Child Care Connection Hawaii programs.

Providers accredited by NAEYC, NECPA, and NAFCC meet national early learning program standards of quality. According to Act 46, Hawaii Session Laws 2020, the director may approve an accrediting organization comparable to the national accreditation organizations, NAEYC, NECPA, and NAFCC. As a result, the department is developing a crosswalk of the national quality standards in accrediting organizations, NAEYC, NECPA, and NAFCC. The Department will establish a process to evaluate and assess how other accreditations align with the national accreditation organizations and must review and compare other types of accreditation, such as the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), to see how they align with *national* quality standards. Therefore, the Department respectfully requests the HD2 insertion of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, in Section 4, Page 10, lines 12, be deleted and section 346-184(b), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), remain as it is currently written.

The Department respectfully requests clarification on *upfront grant funding to cover the cost of accreditation* by one of the national early learning accrediting organizations, as identified in section 346-184(b), HRS, or as approved by the director, and whether the "cost of accreditation" includes accreditation fees plus any incidentals such as but not limited to expenses for furniture, equipment, or minor renovations.

The Department also requests clarification if child care providers seeking renewal of their accreditation from appropriate bodies would be eligible for the upfront grant funding to cover the cost of accreditation and grant funding for technical assistance.

DHS agrees with the extended time frames in section 4 as extending the time to become accredited will give new child care workforce initiatives time to increase capacity and allows eligible facilities ready to access accreditation resources more time to do so in a less pressured time frame. However, given the continuing economic impacts of COVID-19 on child care facilities' ability to maintain sufficient staff levels, DHS suggests the Legislature consider amending section 346-184(a), HRS, to change the accreditation requirement to be voluntary until the child care workforce is more stabilized or subsidized.

The Department recommends that the sums appropriated to award grants to eligible private child care providers participating in the child care accreditation program include the costs for providers with annual accreditation fees and a one-time system modification fee.

DHS continues to investigate the costs for licensed providers to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Early Childhood Program (NECPA), and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). We estimate that approximately 24% of group child care centers are accredited and that accreditation by NAEYC takes approximately 2-3 years to complete.

The average cost for the initial fees to obtain NAEYC accredited status is \$4,155, and fees for initial NECPA accredited status are \$2,331. These costs vary depending on the licensed capacity of the group child care center. These fees are the accrediting organization's fees for processing and assessing an applying group child care center's request for accreditation.

Notably, these accreditation fees do not include additional costs that a group child care center may incur to meet the accrediting organization's standards, nor does it include fees for technical assistance to go through the accreditation process. Once accredited, both

organizations have annual fees to maintain their accreditation. A general fund appropriation will be required to support the proposed grant program, as federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funds may be accessed by reimbursement of specific accreditation fees.

The Department estimates for NAEYC accreditation technical assistance and accreditation fees an appropriation of \$2,102,100. This estimate is based on 220 group child care centers that are not accredited x \$4,155 (average initial NAEYC accreditation fees) + 220 group child care centers x \$5,400 per group child care center (technical assistance for a 3-year period to become accredited). This estimate does not include other costs related to becoming accredited, such as additional staff training, furniture, etc. The Department is still working on gathering information for estimates for the remaining national accreditations. The Department notes that NAEYC accreditation technical assistance provided by the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HiAEYC) to interested group child care centers limited participation to 20 providers in a 12-month period. It is uncertain if this limit on the number of participants is still in effect. Additionally, the Department would need \$80,000 for 1 FTE to develop and administer the accreditation program.

If the measure passes, DHS would need time to develop standards, policies, application forms, and procedures for administering the child care accreditation program. Additionally, DHS must make program and system changes and develop administrative processes and rules to establish and implement the program. Therefore, DHS respectfully requests an effective date of January 31, 2024, or later.

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

TO: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 239 S.D. 2, H.D. 2– RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING  
ACCREDITATION

Hearing Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2023

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Conference Room 308 & Via Teleconference

EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION: Support

The Early Learning Board (ELB) supports the intent of S.B. No. 239 S.D. 2, H.D. 2 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding the particulars of the bill and its implementation.

This bill would establish a child care accreditation program to support licensed or registered child care providers to obtain accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization and by paying for fees, technical assistance, and incidental costs.

Accreditation is a rigorous process in support of quality early learning and care, which can be costly and time-consuming. Both are especially challenging post-COVID. Establishing this program with adequate supports, both financial and technical, will allow more providers to pursue accreditation and those already accredited to maintain that status.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the intent of this bill.



**Parents And  
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 239 SD2 HD2**

**TO:** Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, & Members,  
House Committee on Finance  
**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO  
**DATE:** April 4, 2023 at 3:00 PM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports SB 239 SD2 HD2 Relating to Early Learning Accreditation**, which will support preschools and regulated child care providers to achieve accreditation while preserving the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. However, accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited previously. As the law is currently written, programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families must start this expensive and intensive process by 2024 and complete it by 2029. This requirement creates a significant burden for preschools and child care providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited and it hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available.

The creation of an accreditation program is an important step to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality while preserving and expanding the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

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

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





To: House Committee on Finance  
Hearing Date/Time: April 4, 2023 3:00PM  
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 308  
Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 239 SD2 HD2

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 239 SD2 HD2 which would establish a child care accreditation program and appropriate funds required for the department of human services to provide operational and financial support to the early childhood care and education service providers to obtain accreditation.

Accreditations are often seen as a marker of quality which then drives enrollment. Although many providers would like to be accredited, the lengthy process and costs are barriers for them to achieve accreditation, especially for the small child care centers and homes. AAUW of Hawaii supports this measure because it would lower these barriers.

Please pass this measure and mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Younghee Overly  
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii  
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

*The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership.*



TO: The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Chair  
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Philip Bossert, Executive Director  
Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

RE: **SB 239 SD2 HD2 - Relating to Early Learning Accreditation  
In Strong Support**

DATE: Tuesday, April 4, 2023; Agenda #1  
3:00 p.m.; Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) and its subsidiary, the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS), strongly supports SB 239 SD2 HD2. Increasing funding for early childhood education is important along with accreditation standards for those institutions.

HAIS strongly supports the expansion of types of organizations from which Open Doors service providers may obtain accreditation. In particular, we believe that accreditation by HAIS should be recognized by DHS as an authorized accrediting organization for the Open Doors program. HAIS currently serves 114 independent PK-12 schools and over 33,000 students in Hawai'i. More than 50 of these schools include preschool programs.

In 1996, the legislature transferred responsibility for the licensing of private schools to HAIS and its subsidiary, HCPS. This licensing process ensures on an annual basis that every PK-12 private school is in compliance with the health and safety requirements of all federal and state agencies. In addition, for those schools which seek a higher level of educational program verification and recognition, the HAIS accreditation process provides a much more rigorous protocol of compliance and review, one that is recognized and accepted by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The HAIS accreditation protocol includes a comprehensive self-study process and a three to five-day visit to the school by a team of educators from other private schools in Hawaii and California with comparable programs to verify the information provided in the self-study document. We believe that this protocol and process is in line with those of the accrediting agencies already on the approved list.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Date: April 3, 2023

To: House Committee on Finance  
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Support for SB239 SD2 HD2, Relating to Early Learning Accreditation**

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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 SB239 SD2 HD2**, which would establish a program to support child care providers in obtaining quality accreditation from a national organization and extend the deadline by which Preschool Open Doors providers must achieve accreditation.

With the passage of Act 46 in 2020, early care and learning programs wishing to serve or continue serving children via the state's Preschool Open Doors subsidy program must initiate the process of national quality accreditation by 2024, and achieve accreditation no later than 2029.

Accreditation is a well-known measure of quality for early care and learning programs, and involves an arduous cycle of self- and external assessment to meet a battery of standards related to curriculum, staff and administrative qualifications, training and development, physical environment and more. Accreditation, however, is an expensive, intensive, and time-consuming endeavor for both programs new to the process, as well as those seeking to renew their time-limited accreditation. Basic fees to undergo the process with an accrediting body typically run into the thousands (e.g., \$1,825 for the National Association for the Education of Young Children/NAEYC) and providers must often make significant financial investments to upgrade their facilities, classroom environments, equipment and materials. Additionally, many programs need the support of coaching and technical assistance from content and process experts who can advise on areas needing improvement to meet standards, as well as the documentation and paperwork processes of the accrediting body.

Without a support program for our preschool and child care programs, the accreditation requirement of Act 46 creates a significant barrier and/or burden for these programs in serving Preschool Open Doors families and will significantly impact efforts to expand access to publicly-supported preschool opportunities for children. The creation of the accreditation program proposed by **SB239 SD2 HD2**, which would provide technical and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers, is critical to helping programs achieve important markers of quality and to preserving and expanding the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Additionally, given the tenuous state of child care programs and workforce capacity, we support considerations to either change Preschool Open Doors accreditation requirements to be voluntary, until workforce conditions are more stable, or extend the timeframes by which programs must become accredited, as proposed by this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in support of SB239 SD2 HD2**.



*Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.*

To: Representative Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

Re: SB239 SD2 HD2, relating to early learning accreditation  
3:00 p.m., April 4, 2023

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and committee members:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 239 SD2 HD2, relating to early learning accreditation and respectfully ask for amendments.**

Early learning programs often use accreditation as one tool to mark quality. Unfortunately, **accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming.** For example, fees to begin and complete accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) begin at \$1,825 and increase with the size of the preschool. Many preschools and child care providers also seek technical assistance to identify areas needing improvement, complete necessary paperwork, collect documentation and other tasks to ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible. During preparations for accreditation, it is common for preschools and child care providers to identify upgrades that need to be made to buildings, classrooms, furniture or play equipment. These too cost money. Once a preschool or child care provider successfully achieves accreditation, they then must pay annual fees to maintain it. **All these reasons compound to make it extremely burdensome for many child care providers, especially small centers and family child care homes, to pursue accreditation.**

H.R.S. §346-184 currently requires existing Preschool Open Doors providers to begin the accreditation process by July 1, 2024 and obtain accreditation by July 1, 2029. New providers must have or obtain accreditation within seven calendar years of first receiving funds. **This means that unaccredited providers who are already serving Preschool Open Doors families must begin this expensive and intensive process within the next 18 months.**

This requirement places a heavy burden on an already taxed early childhood care and education sector in a very short amount of time. **They cannot afford to carry more costs on their own; they need assistance and more time to begin and complete the accreditation the process.**

*Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.*

SB239 will help providers shoulder the cost of achieving accreditation. The bill, as it is currently written, allows the Department of Human Services to support providers with funding that can cover myriad expenses associated with the accreditation process. **It is important that the Department has this flexibility to support providers in the various ways necessary.**

We respectfully ask the committee **amend this measure in two ways.**

**First, we ask that the committee include the deadlines for accreditation as written in the original draft of the bill.** The following amended deadlines have received support from early childhood education community members.

SECTION 4. Section 346-184, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) Each service provider of the preschool open doors program shall be accredited or shall obtain accreditation within seven calendar years of first receiving any funds from the preschool open doors program; provided that any existing service provider unaccredited on July 1, 2022, shall commence the accreditation process no later than July 1, [~~2024~~] 2029, and obtain accreditation by July 1, [~~2029~~] 2034; provided further that the director may grant to any service provider one or more extensions to obtain accreditation on a case-by-case basis."

**Second, we ask that the committee remove Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools from the list of accepted accreditation bodies.** H.R.S. §346-184 as it is currently written allows the DHS director to approve additional organizations to satisfy the accreditation requirement. DHS is currently undergoing the work of researching and establishing that formal process.

The list of accrediting organizations as originally approved by the State Legislature in Act 46 SLH 2020 only includes national organizations that accredit early care and learning institutions and not local organizations or organizations accrediting elementary, middle and/or high school educational institutions, like the Hawai'i Association for Independent Schools.



*Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.*

We believe that, once the process is in place, DHS will approve additional accrediting organizations, which may include Hawai'i Association for Independent Schools as well as the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC). **We believe that the best course of action is to allow DHS to create and implement this process before adding any more accrediting organizations.**

**Please support SB239 SD2 HD2 with amendments.** This program will ensure providers of all sizes meet the quality markers our young children and their families deserve while preserving the current stock of available providers participating in Preschool Open Doors.

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

**SB-239-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 8:25:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

- Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education.
- As the law is currently written, programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families must start this expensive and intensive process by 2024 and complete it by 2029.
- This requirement creates a significant burden for preschools and child care providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited as well as hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available.

Mahalo!

**SB-239-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 11:33:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this measure essential for the growth and sustainability of our early childhood workforce.



**SB-239-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 1:18:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jayne arasaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and committee members,

Please support SB239 which will support preschools and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation and preserve the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families. Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. However, accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited previously. As the law is currently written, programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families must start this expensive and intensive process by 2024 and complete it by 2029. This requirement creates a significant burden for preschools and child care providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited as well as hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available.

The creation of an accreditation program is an important step to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality and preserve and expand the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Please support this measure.

Testimony of  
Malia Tsuchiya

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE REGULAR  
SESSION OF 2023

To: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, April 4, 2023

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE Conference Room 308  
State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street

Re: SB 239 SD2 HD 2

Position: **IN SUPPORT**

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and honored members of the Committee on Finance,

Thank you for allowing this bill to be heard. Thank you for allowing testimony **IN SUPPORT OF SB 239**.

I am a mother of five and have always sought to enroll my children in accredited schools. Accreditation is a quality assurance that helps me to know that the provider has gone through a self-study program that helps to ensure that developmentally appropriate activities are taking place and the staff is well trained and qualified. Without accreditation there is no way for me to know with assurance that the provider has met these foundational components of quality.

Many funding agencies also view accreditation as a means of quality assurance and will require a provider to be accredited in order to be eligible to receive funds. Without the additional funding received from these agencies many providers would be greatly challenged to remain open. However, without accreditation funding agencies have no idea if what they are paying for is really worth the value of their dollars spent. At an average of approx \$13,000 per year spent per child, funding agencies deserve to know that their money is well spent on quality developmental programs.

Finally, I am also a previous preschool teacher and have been in the early childcare and education industry for nearly 20 years. I have personally been through the accreditation process a number of times and know from experience that it is time consuming and expensive. Without additional support accreditation can be daunting and may seem overly cumbersome to anyone new to the accreditation process. SB 239 will allow providers the support they need to

provide the assurances of quality that our community and children deserve. Thank you for your time in hearing this bill please **VOTE IN FAVOR OF SB239 SD2 HD2.**

Mahalo,  
Malia Tsuchiya

**SB-239-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/3/2023 7:15:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julie S Kalakau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Early Childhood Accreditation is an important measure to ensure we are providing quality care in the state of Hawaii. Accreditation ensures that all areas of development and school policies are meeting a unified standard of best practices. Unfortunately, for many preschools the process seems unattainable due to high cost and intensive time requirements when we are already working with limited staff and funding. This deters programs from seeking accreditation. This bill would ensure that all programs would have access to this valuable resource in elevating Hawaii's early childhood programs to a high standard. This important step will provide the much needed technical and financial assistance to programs and expand the number of programs supporting the Preschool Open Doors program. Preschool Open Doors supports more children in getting a quality start to education.

Thank you for your consideration,

Julie Kalakau

Director, Sunshine School

Elaine Yamashita  
105 Kamehameiki Rd.  
Kula, HI 96790-8451  
808-281-1216  
[elainey208@gmail.com](mailto:elainey208@gmail.com)

April 3, 2023

Aloha to Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa and committee members:

I am in support of SB 239 SD2 HD2, with comments on the latest proposed amendments. I'm an advocate for early care and education, longtime Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children member (HiAEYC, an affiliate of NAEYC), former NAEYC governing board member, and professor emerita of UH Maui College.

Comments:

On p. 8, lines 16-20 should be deleted to be aligned with current research. In the early years, care and education are entwined and inseparable. Page 4, starting line 17, continuing to p. 5, line 9, covers the intent to align with the state constitution.

P. 10, lines 1 and 2 – the dates in the previous version of this bill (2029 and 2034) should provide enough time to get the accreditation support program up and functioning, and to stabilize the early care and education workforce. Delaying it further would not serve our keiki and their 'ohana well. It is well established that *high quality* early care and education programs are what make a significant difference in children's lives. Programs are eager to improve, and delaying the requirement for accreditation only pushes the resources further away.

P. 10, line 12: As Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools is not a national or international organization, it seems appropriate to strike this line.

Programs are wanting to pursue accreditation, and need financial and technical support in order to successfully bring the program up to national accreditation standards. High quality programs provide a strong foundation for our keiki and their 'ohana. The key to high quality is their quality staff, and this measure would provide support to staff and the program.

Mahalo,  
*Elaine Yamashita*

April 3, 2023

To: Representative Kyle Yamshita, Chair  
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

Subject: **Measure** – SB 239 SD2 HD1 TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION  
**Hearing Date** – April 4, 2023  
**Time** - 3:00 PM  
**Location** - Room 329

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. I am with the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Education (COE) and serve as the director of the Hawai‘i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE<sup>3</sup>) Project.

**This testimony is in support of SB239 SD2 HD2 with comments.**

Research shows a direct correlation between high-quality early care and learning and children's positive long-term outcomes in life, including increased educational attainment, healthier lifestyles, and more successful careers.

Studies have demonstrated that early care and learning program staff across the U.S. can implement best practices and develop a consistent understanding of how to achieve and maintain high quality by successfully obtaining early learning program accreditation. In addition, the accreditation process leads to increased staff morale, greater staff retention, and a more positive and energetic work atmosphere overall.

National early learning program accreditation systems require early care and learning programs meet standards that exceed minimum State regulatory requirements. Achieving accreditation involves extensive self-study and validation by professionals outside the program to verify that quality standards are met. However, going through the accreditation process can be expensive, time consuming and difficult for many preschools and family child care providers to complete.

I am in support of requiring the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a child care accreditation program, including one full-time position for this program to assist licensed and regulated child care programs to obtain accreditation with technical and financial assistance.

I support authorizing the use of the child care grant program special fund for child care accreditation program grants.

I support that each Preschool Open Doors (POD) program shall be accredited within seven years of first receiving funds from the POD program to emphasize the importance of accreditation as a marker to improving the quality of early learning programs.

I support accreditation shall be obtained from one or more of the following national early learning accrediting organizations: (1) National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); (2) National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA); and (3) National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).

**In SB239 SD2 HD2 on page 10, I recommend striking out (4) Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) because it is not a national or international accreditation organization like NAEYC, NECPA, NAFCC.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB239 SD2 HD2 with comments.

**SB-239-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 2:13:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Elento	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Our statute and policies should not require such sharing of student information in order for a provider to participate in childcare/preschool subsidies. ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) is included in statute as K-12 organization and must be included in the early learning statutes as HAIS has been included in this bill.

The perception of religion and state is erroneous. ACSI accredited providers are put in a position to deny accreditation due to freedom of religion. Is ACSI considered a national early learning accreditation as defined in this statute, and what standards would the director follow to approve an accreditation organization not listed? I request the Legislature fully consider adding ACSI or deleting the accreditation organization requirements currently in the statute, Section 346-184(b).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.