

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 239 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING
ACCREDITATION

Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Time: 10:10 am

Location: Conference Room 211

EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION: Support the Intent

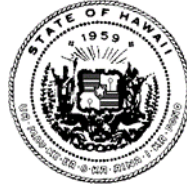
The Early Learning Board (ELB) supports the intent of S.B. No. 239 S.D.1 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding the particulars of the bill and its implementation.

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 S.B. No. 239.

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

February 27, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 239 SD1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION.**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 10:10 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill, provides comments, and suggests additional amendments for consistency. However, DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation in this measure not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget and Governor's Messages.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish within the Department of Human Services' Child Care Subsidy Program Office, a Child Care Accreditation Program to support licensed or registered child care providers to obtain accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization or an accrediting-organization, approved by the Director of Human Services. Extends the deadline by which unaccredited service providers of the Preschool Open Doors Program must commence the accreditation process and obtain accreditation. Appropriates funds. Effective 12/31/2050. (SD1).

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;
- 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.

DHS appreciates the SD1 amendments and respectfully requests the following amendments to be consistent with the SD1 amendment expanding the accrediting entity to organizations approved by the Director of Human Services:

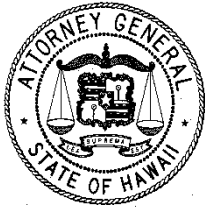
- Part I, Section 2 (b), page 3, at lines 16-21, "The program shall award upfront grant funding to an eligible child care provider who has committed to obtaining accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization[,] or an accrediting organization approved by the director of human services, which shall be used to pay for the expenses necessary for the child care provider to obtain the accreditation..." , and
- Part I, Section 2 (b), page 4, at lines 3-7, "Incidental expenses to obtain furniture and equipment and to make minor renovations to the child care provider's facilities required by the national early learning accrediting organization or an accrediting organization approved by the director of human services to issue the accreditation."

DHS agrees with the extended time frames in Section 3. Extending the time to become accredited will give new child care workforce initiatives time to increase capacity and give

eligible facilities ready to access accreditation resources more time to do so in a less pressured time frame.

As the measure progresses through the session, DHS will provide cost estimates to contract an entity to establish, implement, and administer the child care accreditation program, including funding for one full-time equivalent position. In addition, once the Legislature appropriates funds, DHS will need time to develop and implement administrative rules and make system modifications.

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



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 239, S.D. 1, RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: Wednesday, March 1, 2023 **TIME:** 10:10 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211

TESTIFIER(S): **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**

(For more information, contact James W. Walther or
Melissa J. Kolonie, Deputy Attorneys General, at 587-3050)

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments regarding this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) establish within the Department of Human Services' Child Care Subsidy Program Office, a Child Care Accreditation Program to support licensed or registered child care providers to obtain accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization; (2) extend the deadlines by which unaccredited service providers of the preschool open doors program must commence the accreditation process and obtain accreditation; (3) appropriate funds for the establishment of the Child Care Accreditation Program; and (4) appropriate funds to be deposited into the Child Care Grant Special Fund to be disbursed and expended to award grants to private child care providers participating in the Child Care Accreditation Program for certain costs required to obtain accreditation.

The bill provides an appropriation of public money, on page 7, line 19 – page 8, line 10, for the purpose of providing grants to private child care providers to assist them in obtaining accreditation. Article VII, section 4, of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii provides that, "[n]o grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law." This bill does not include standards by which the Department of Human Services is to distribute the funds to program participants.

We therefore recommend that this bill be amended to insert sufficient standards for the Department of Human Services to distribute the funds appropriated in this bill as grants to private child care providers. Examples of existing statutes that provide standards for agencies to expend funds are part II of chapter 9, and sections 10-17, 210D-11, and 383-128, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which provide standards for the administrative grant of public money. Additionally, we have attached draft standards to this testimony as a sample to work from and we are happy to work with the Committee to develop more specific standards.

The bill may be also subject to challenge as violating article VII, section 5, of the Hawaii State Constitution by failing to appropriate the funds out of the Child Care Grant Special Fund to be expended by the Department of Human Services. We recommend deleting the wording in the second paragraph of section 5 of the bill on page 8, lines 5-10, to read as follows:

SECTION 5. 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 2023-2024 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be deposited into the child care grant program special fund established pursuant to section 346-183, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

~~[The sums appropriated shall be disbursed and expended by the department of human services to award grants to private child care providers participating in the child care accreditation program established pursuant to section 2 of this Act, for the purposes set forth in section 2 of this Act, without regard to section 346-183, Hawaii Revised Statutes.]~~

Furthermore, to ensure that the monies are appropriated out of the special fund to be expended by the Department of Human Services, we recommend adding another section as follows:

SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the child care grant program special fund the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be disbursed and expended by the department of human services to award grants to private child care providers participating in the child care accreditation program established pursuant to section 2 of this Act, for the purposes set forth in section 2 of this Act, without regard to section 346-183, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of human services for the purposes of section 2 of this Act.

To accommodate the aforementioned amendments, sections 6 and 7 of the bill will need to be renumbered sections 7 and 8 respectively.

Furthermore, if this grant program is intended to be an ongoing program, the Legislature may want to consider codifying it in chapter 346, HRS.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

POSSIBLE STANDARDS FOR THE GRANTS IN THIS BILL

I. DEFINITIONS

Definitions. As used in this Act, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

"Grant" means an award of state funds to a specified recipient to support the activities of the recipient and permit the community to benefit from those activities.

"Private educational institution" means a non-public entity that provides: (1) educational services for any grades from kindergarten through grade twelve; (2) post-secondary education; or (3) pre-kindergarten level services that are provided by an entity that holds itself out to the public as a school or educational institution, or that are identified by the entity as educational services rather than solely as child care services.

"Recipient" means a child care provider receiving a grant.

II. APPLICATIONS

Applications for grants. Requests for grants shall be submitted to the department in accordance with the administrative rules adopted by the department to administer the grant program. Each request shall at a minimum state:

- (1) The name of the child care provider requesting grant funds;
- (2) The expenses that are necessary for the childcare provider to obtain the accreditation; and
- (3) The age range of the children that the child care provider serves.

III. STANDARDS

Qualifying standards for grant funds. A child care provider applying for a grant shall meet the following

standards; specifically, the applicant shall provide proof that the applicant:

- (1) Has United States citizenship or permanent United States resident alien status and is a resident of the State of Hawaii at the time of application;
- (2) Is currently licensed or registered as a child care provider, or is an exempt provider approved by the department;
- (3) Provides child care at the time of application;
- (4) Is in compliance with other federal, state, or county statutes, rules, or ordinances, necessary to conduct the activities or provide the services for which a grant is awarded;
- (5) Complies with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability;
- (6) Agrees not to use state funds for entertainment or lobbying activities;
- (7) Allows the state agency to which funds for the grant were appropriated for expenditure, legislative committees and their staff, and the auditor full access to their records, reports, files, and other related documents and information for purposes of monitoring, measuring the effectiveness, and ensuring the proper expenditure of the grant;
- (8) Is not part of or owned or operated by or as a private educational institution;
- (9) Satisfies any other standards that may be required by the source of funding; and

- (10) Meets all other standards prescribed in rules adopted by the department to implement the grants.

Requirement for child care providers receiving grant funds.

Each child care provider who, after meeting the qualifications set out in section [__], receives grant funds from the department, is required to obtain accreditation and continue to provide child care for [] number of years after receiving accreditation.

IV. REVIEW OF APPLICATION

Required review of requests for grant funds. (a) Every request for grant funds shall be reviewed in accordance with this section.

(b) Every request for a grant shall be submitted to the department on an application form provided by the department. Each application shall at a minimum contain the information in section [__].

(c) The department shall review each request to determine whether the applicant is eligible to receive grant funds.

(d) The department shall make a final decision on each request.

(e) The department shall inform each grant applicant of the disposition of the application's request.

(f) The appeal process in the department's rules shall be available for any applicant who is denied a request for grant funds.

V. CONTRACTS

Contracts. The department shall not release the public funds approved for a grant unless a contract is entered into between the department and the recipient of the grant. The department shall develop and determine, in consultation with and

subject to the review and approval of the attorney general, the specific contract form to be used.

VI. ALLOTMENT

Allotment. Appropriations for grants to be made under this Act shall be subject to the allotment system generally applicable to all appropriations made by the legislature.

VII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation. (a) Every department grant contract shall be monitored by the department to ensure compliance with this part.

(b) Every department grant contract shall be evaluated annually to determine whether the grant attained the intended results in the manner contemplated.

(c) The department shall develop procedures and adopt rules under chapter 91 for monitoring and evaluating grant contracts.

VIII. DUTY TO DISCLOSE AND PENALTY

Continued eligibility. Any recipient of a grant who withholds or omits any material fact or deliberately misrepresents facts to the department shall be in violation of this part. In addition to any other penalties provided by law, any recipient found by the department to have violated this part or the terms of its contract shall be prohibited from applying for any department grants for a period of five years from the date of termination.

IX. RULES

Rules. The department shall adopt rules, which may be done without regard to chapter 91, to administer the child care accreditation program.



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

February 28, 2023

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: **Measure:** S.B. No. 329 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING
ACCREDITATION
Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2023
Time: 10:10 am
Location: Conference Room 211

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

EOEL supports the intent of S.B. No. 239 S.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding 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 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.



TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

RE: **SB 239 SD1 - Relating to Early Learning Accreditation
In Strong Support**

DATE: Wednesday, March 1, 2023
10:10 a.m.; Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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 SD1. 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.



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: Senator Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: SB239 SD1, relating to early learning accreditation
10:10 a.m., March 1, 2023

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the committee:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 239 SD1, relating to early learning accreditation.**

Early learning programs often use accreditation as one tool to mark quality. Accreditation represents numerous measures that indicate that a program is developmentally appropriate and uses best practices in nurturing and educating our youngest learners. During the accreditation and re-accreditation processes, early learning programs display the ways their curriculum, teacher qualifications, environments and other components meet rigorous standards.

Unfortunately, **accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming** for providers. 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 not uncommon 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.** Preschools and regulated child care providers typically already operate on razor-thin margins to keep their doors open, pay their staff and serve young children and families. These are the very same providers that have faced numerous challenges over the last three years of the pandemic. Most did not close their doors for essential workers even when everything else did. They continued to serve families at great cost—financial and otherwise—to ensure young keiki could continue to grow and learn with them.

The proposed accreditation program is an important step forward for the state of early childhood care and education, for the Preschool Open Doors program and for providers across Hawai'i.

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.**

Please support SB239 SD1. 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



Date: February 28, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Support for SB239 SD1, Relating to Early Learning Accreditation**

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 SD1, 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 SD1**, 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, we agree with agency concerns regarding the tenuous state of child care programs and support recommendations to either change Preschool Open Doors accreditation requirements to be voluntary, until workforce conditions are more stable, or extending 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 SD1**.



LATE

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday March 1, 2023 10:10AM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211
Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 239 SD1

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 239 SD1 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. 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.

TO: WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SB 239 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION

POSITION: IN SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning Senate Bill (SB) 239, relating to early learning accreditation, which will support preschools and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation and preserve the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families. As a member of the community, I strongly support SB 239 as I believe that having a stable early learning framework is critical to the economic and social health of our state.

Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. Currently, accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming for providers. The creation of an accreditation program strengthens the early learning system in Hawaii as it is a critical step in providing technical and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality. It also preserves and expands the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

As a community member, I strongly believe we should have measures in place that support a healthy, robust early learning system, because it is the foundation on which the workforce relies so that they can work. Strong, accredited early learning systems are a springboard for the economy. I appreciate the opportunity to provide the Committee with my testimony in support of SB 239.

Thank you,

Moevanu Jameson
moevanu@yahoo.com

SB-239-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 3:10:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raya Esteban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and committee members,

Please support SB239 SD1, which will help preschools and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation and safeguard the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors (POD) families. Accreditation is one of the most recognized measures of quality in early childhood care and education. However, accreditation is **costly, rigorous, and time-consuming** for providers who have not been accredited previously and for those who have to repeat the accreditation process. The bottomline is that many preschools and child care providers are tapped out of money and energy to begin and complete the accreditation that will soon be required to continue serving POD families. Additionally, without the support and guidance of an accreditation program, this requirement stalls efforts to increase the number of programs available. The creation of an accreditation program is an essential 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 POD families.

As a young, middle-class woman hoping to start a family soon in Honolulu, it is my sincere hope that affordable, high-quality childcare programs will be available to my future children. Ensuring that programs serving POD families get the support they need to gain accreditation is a huge step in the right direction. Please support this measure—for the present and future families who seek the quality child care that their keiki deserve.

Mahalo,

Raya Esteban

Feb. 27, 2023

To: Senator Donavan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Subject: **Measure** – SB 239 SD1 RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION
Hearing Date – March 1, 2023
Time - 10:10 AM
Location - Room 211

This testimony is in support of SB239 SD1.

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 (ECE³) Project.

I am in support of SB239 SD1 which will support licensed preschools and regulated child care providers achieve program accreditation and preserve the number of quality preschools and child care programs available for Preschool Open Doors families.

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

For many years, I assisted DHS licensed preschools through an accreditation process. I found one of the important benefits of accreditation is how teachers and other staff of early learning programs develop a shared understanding and commitment to quality. The accreditation process leads to increased staff morale, greater staff retention, and a more positive, energetic work atmosphere overall.

SB239 SD1 states that programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families shall be accredited or shall obtain accreditation within seven calendar years of first serving any funds from Preschool Open Doors Program. Therefore, it will be of tremendous help if these programs have technical support, mentoring, and funding to complete and obtain accreditation.

Therefore, the establishment of an accreditation support program in the Department of Human Services (DHS) is an important step to providing 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB239 SD1.

SB-239-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:39:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and committee members,

Please support SB239, which will help preschools and regulated child care providers to achieve accreditation and preserve the 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 childcare providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited and hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available.

Creating an accreditation program is a crucial step to providing technical and financial assistance to regulated preschools and childcare providers in achieving important quality markers and preserving and expanding the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Please support this measure.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise

SB-239-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 12:55:26 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Elento	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

Our keiki, families, childcare providers and preschools need less regulations, less paperwork, not more. **Oppose** SB239 SD1.

I believe some standards of a "national early learning accreditation", such as NAEYC, specified in our statutes, may directly conflict with a provider's and child's religious freedom and First Amendment rights. Families need fair access to faith-based providers holding the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) accreditation.

Requiring a service provider to seek accreditation from a "national early learning accrediting organization" would disqualify some private schools and childcare providers solely because they are religious. Refer to the US Supreme Court's decision issued on June 21, 2022, in Carson v. Makin: https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/20-1088_dbfi.pdf.

The director of human services is limited to approving a "national early learning accrediting organization", a decision that is subjective and could change, an unfair provision.

I do not believe DHS recognizes ACSI as a "national early learning accrediting organization" because schools without NAEYC (or an accreditation listed in statute) do not qualify for the 100% highest-level scale for subsidy payments but only for about 75% maximum. The providers with only ACSI (WASC, HAIS) accreditation should also be at the 100% level, not 75%, effective immediately, and the providers not be subject to losing all eligibility for Preschool Open Doors and childcare subsidies on a deadline set for years ahead.

This bill should add ACSI to the list of accreditations for pre-K, as the statutes include ACSI in defining private schools for K-12 only. Other testimonies are seeking later implementation dates; providers need assurance now, not next year: delete the accreditation mandate instead and add ACSI.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in **Opposition of SB239SD1 and your consideration of the suggestions.**

SB-239-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 9:45:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-239-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 10:34:21 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mai Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am testifying in support of SB 239, To preserve the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families and to support regulated preschool and child care providers in improving and/or maintaining quality.

- This bill seeks to support regulated preschools and child care providers to achieve accreditation.

- DHS would be required to establish a program to support providers by paying for fees, technical assistance and incidental costs.
- This bill also extends the time providers have to begin and achieve accreditation to participate in the Preschool Open Doors program.

As a former preschool teacher at an accredited center, I support Accreditation of our local programs as the highest level of quality. However, it is very expensive to become accredited. We need the support of the State and programs to make this high quality learning program a reality for our early childcare providers. Mahalo

LATE

Committee on Ways and Means
The Hawaii State Senate
415 S Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: SUPPORT SB 239 SD1

March 1, 2023

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and esteemed members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing to ask that you SUPPORT BILL [SB 239 SD1](#), which seeks to establish within the Department of Human Services' Child Care Subsidy Program Office, a Child Care Accreditation Program to support licensed or registered child care providers to obtain accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization or an accrediting organization approved by the Director of Human Services.

As an educator in higher education and a parent of two children of my own, I know first hand how necessary qualified, caring child care workers are and how difficult securing child care slots in qualified centers can be. In the wake of the pandemic, a number of our workers still have not come back to working full time due to parental obligations, or the cost or unavailability of child care. Many of my students and the faculty at my school resort to watching children as they work and may be found attending Zoom meetings with their keiki on their laps. Research also suggests that keiki that attend preschool has positive, lifelong effects on subsequent academic and quality of life outcomes.

The demand for infant and toddler care and early learning is far greater than the supply in Hawai'i. Bill [SB 239 SD1](#) appears to ease the path to accreditation for child care and early learning providers, which will, hopefully, encourage more to attain accreditation and create additional quality early learning and child care options for our local population.

For all these reasons and more, I strongly SUPPORT BILL [SB 239 SD1](#). Mahalo nui for introducing and hearing these bills!

Sincerely,



Erika Molyneux
Mother of two, Resident of Kaneohe, Hawai'i
Instructor, New Media Arts, Leeward Community College