

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER, ESQ.  
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

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

March 3, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 1354, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO CHILDREN**

Hearing: Tuesday, March 3, 2009; 4:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of H.B. 1354, H.D. 1 is to appropriate temporary assistance for needy families funds and general revenue funds for the healthy start and enhanced healthy start programs, to maintain current services, to hire additional staff and for provider training.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully opposes this measure.

The Healthy Start program has been associated with prevention of child abuse since its inception as a pilot program in 1985. However, a federal review of Hawaii's Child Welfare program in 2003 showed that Hawaii's rate of child re-abuse was no lower than the rest of the nation.

Since that 2003 federal review, the Department has been able to successfully utilize its TANF funding in developing and implementing contractual services that began

putting more emphasis on strengthening families and addressing risk factors before they led to abuse. The results of these efforts have been:

- a) The number of children in State care has decreased by half, from about 3,000 children in 2005 to just 1,500 children today. This is the lowest number since 1993; and
- b) Hawaii currently has one of the lowest rates of child re-abuse in the country. The child re-abuse rate dropped from 6 percent in 2003 to just 3.1 percent in 2008, which is far better than the nationally accepted standard of 6.1 percent.

During this same period of time, the Healthy Start program had been experiencing increased reductions in general revenue funding, and as a result a reduced presence in the community.

DHS firmly believes in the wisdom and cost-effectiveness of supporting poverty prevention programs using our annual block grant of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Federal funds.

We do not believe that expanding our investment of TANF funds in Healthy Start, a Department of Health program, would be the best use of our limited TANF Federal funds.

It is important to note that Healthy Start already receives about \$1.7 million in TANF Federal funds each year under Act 107, which Governor Linda Lingle signed into law in May 2007. Also, we already invest \$3.2 million of TANF Federal funds in Enhanced Healthy Start, which targets families reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) for child abuse or neglect.

To provide some background, DHS has invested Federal TANF funds in a wide range of family strengthening and positive youth development initiatives across the State

for families, keiki and youth. These include programs that help youth succeed in school and prepare for rewarding careers, while deterring substance abuse, truancy, crime and out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Other TANF-funded programs improve parenting skills and help prevent domestic violence.

All our TANF-funded poverty programs are having a positive impact on reducing child abuse and neglect. Among these programs is Enhanced Healthy Start, which is based on Healthy Start and designed exclusively to help at-risk families who are involved in CPS. DHS provides Enhanced Healthy Start with \$3.2 million in TANF Federal funds each year to promote healthy childhood growth and improve parenting skills and parent-child interactions.

Our investment of TANF Federal funds in a wide range of anti-poverty initiatives is already producing significant results. As cited previously, since 2005, the number of children removed from their biological parents and placed in foster care has declined by half to just 1,500 children – the lowest number since 1993. More importantly, the child re-abuse rate has also fallen by half since 2005, meaning that Hawaii's keiki are now among the safest in the nation.

The success of these anti-poverty programs would be undercut if additional TANF Federal funds are diverted into the Healthy Start program. This would likely, and paradoxically, lead to a rise in child abuse and neglect cases, along with an increase in foster care placements. It should also be noted that Healthy Start, a voluntary program, had greater funding prior to 2005, but the number of foster care placements was rising during that time, along with our child re-abuse rates.

In conclusion, funding for Healthy Start should not come at the expense of anti-poverty programs that are producing significant results. Diverting additional TANF funds

would also be contrary to the DHS mission of helping our most vulnerable residents, including at-risk families and children.

The Department also respectfully requests that the \$28.2 million in TANF Federal funds restricted in the current State fiscal year 2009 budget be restored for the biennium so that we can continue to fund the programs, services and benefits that have, among other positive outcomes, strengthened families and contributed to the reduction, by half, of child re-abuse and neglect since 2005. This is neither the time to freeze Federal funds nor divert Federal funds from the investment we have made that is working so well.

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



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MĀNOA

March 2, 2009

Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair  
Members of the Human Finance Committee  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 306  
Honolulu, Hi 96813

Re: HB 1354, Relating to TANF

Dear Representative Oshiro:

I am Gail Breakey, Director of the Hawaii Family Support Institute testifying in support of HB 1354.

This bill provides funding for the Healthy Start and Enhanced Healthy Start programs. Healthy Start conducts risk assessments at all hospitals to identify families of newborns who are in need of support services to promote the safety, well-being and positive development of these young children. Families are referred to home visiting services which address risk factors, mentor parents in positive parenting skills and promote early childhood development. This is an unduplicated service; it is voluntary as are most health and social services.

Enhanced Healthy Start provides services to families with infants after a report has been made to child welfare services. It also provides intensive home visiting services with similar activities and goals, but lacks pro-active hospital based case finding.

It is clear that in this time of economic downturn, these funds will be sorely needed as part of the effort to maintain services for the highest risk families. The service providers and the Department of Health are in the process of developing a more streamlined assessment process and services that will actually intervene with only the highest risk families, those with scores of 40 and over on the Family Stress Checklist, who according to the validation study on the Checklist have a 50% likelihood of becoming a child welfare case.

Thank you very much for your serious consideration of allocating these funds to the Healthy Start program.

Sincerely,

Gail Breakey



**PACT**

**PARENTS AND  
CHILDREN TOGETHER**

*A Family Service Agency*

1485 Linapuni Street, Suite 105  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819  
Tel. (808) 847-3285  
Fax (808) 841-1485

**OAHU PROGRAMS**

- COMMUNITY TEEN CENTER
- CPS VISITATION CENTERS
- EARLY HEAD START/  
HEAD START
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER
- FAMILY PEACE CENTER
- FAMILY VISITATION CENTER
- HANA LIKE HOME  
VISITOR PROGRAM
- HAWAII FAMILY SUPPORT  
CENTER
- INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES
- KANEOHE COMMUNITY  
FAMILY CENTER
- KPT FAMILY CENTER
- OHIA - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
SHELTER
- PU'UHONUA DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE CENTER
- RESPIRE CARE

**MAUI COUNTY PROGRAMS**

- FAMILY PEACE CENTER
- INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES
- LANAI INTEGRATED SERVICES
- FAMILY VISITATION CENTER

**KAUAI COUNTY PROGRAMS**

- FAMILY VISITATION CENTER
- INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

**MEMBER:**

- CWLA
- ALOHA UNITED WAY
- COA

**TO:** Rep. Marcus Oshiro, Chair  
Rep. Marilyn Lee, Vice-Chair  
House Finance Committee

**FROM:** Julie Falicki, Program Director  
Parents And Children Together  
Hana Like Home Visitor Program

**DATE:** March 2, 2009

**RE: HB 1354  
In Support of Funding for Healthy Start \$9.4 M**

My name is Julie Falicki. I am the Program Director for PACT's Hana Like Home Visitor Program. Hana Like is a member of the statewide Healthy Start Network. I have worked in the Healthy Start program in a variety of roles since 1993. PACT is one of Hawaii's leading not-for-profit human services providers, with 12 programs statewide serving over 9,000 clients annually. I am submitting testimony **in support of funding for Healthy Start.**

The importance of the first three years of life has been well established. The years from birth to three lay the foundation for each child's cognitive and emotional development. The quality of the child's early environment, including their relationship with their parents and the provision of early learning experiences, is predictive of that child's later success in areas such as school performance and social adjustment.

It is the mission of the Healthy Start program to optimize each child's development during these critical years by providing at-risk families with the skills and support needed to nurture their child's development and to avoid setting patterns of parenting which may lead to child abuse and neglect and poor developmental outcomes. This is done through regular home visitation by a Home Visitor, developmental screening to identify and address developmental concerns, the provision of information on effective parenting techniques and child development, and referral to community resources to reduce family stress. The services provided by the paraprofessional Home Visitor are supported by professional Child Development Specialists, who address developmental concerns, and Family Specialists, who address risk factors such as mental health issues and substance abuse.

During these tough economic times, it is tempting to eliminate programs that may be viewed by some as non-essential. Families referred to Healthy Start are those determined to be at risk for child



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abuse and neglect, as measured by a validated tool. The Healthy Start program has proven to be effective in ameliorating those factors associated with child abuse and neglect, such as unrealistic expectations of children, lack of knowledge of child development, history of abuse and neglect in the parents' own childhood, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues, social isolation, and limited resources. This is accomplished through direct services by the Healthy Start team, as well as referrals to community resources. The program aims to build supports and reduce stressors, thereby promoting each family's capacity to foster their child's development as well as the family's self-reliance and resilience. The program also promotes the use of a medical home, immunizations, family planning and prenatal care to avoid costs associated with crisis care.

Elimination of Healthy Start will take away this safety net for vulnerable families, which will result in increased costs elsewhere, such as Child Welfare Services and foster care, and costs associated with developmental delays such as special education. Additional short-term costs include unemployment insurance for over 200 Healthy Start employees statewide. The state will lose income from Medicaid reimbursements drawn down by the program at a rate of around 1.5 million a year, as well as a federal Administration for Children and Families grant of 2.5 million recently awarded to the Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Branch to continue to improve the program over the next 5 years.

Long-term costs associated with child abuse and neglect include school failure, substance abuse, an unprepared work force, mental health treatment, crime, as well as illnesses now known to be associated with early trauma and neglect. Healthy Start has been a national leader in prevention services for over 20 years, and has been a model for similar programs in over 35 states. Let us continue to be a model for protecting our most vulnerable citizens.



# Maui Family Support Services, Inc.

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1844 Wili Pa Loop, Wailuku, HI 96793 (808) 242-0900 Fax: (808) 249-2800  
[www.mfss.org](http://www.mfss.org)

...because keiki matter!!!

March 2, 2009

Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair  
Members of the House Finance Committee  
Hawaii Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96873

Re: **In Support of** HB 1354 HD1 RELATING TO CHILDREN.

Dear Representative Marcus Oshiro and Committee members:

While hearing the issues on HB 1354 HD1 please consider the State of Hawaii's **Healthy Start Program (HSP)** modeled after nationwide and internationally for its effectiveness. The HSP works with low-income, high risk families with very young children between the ages of zero to three years old. Enhanced Healthy Start's (EnHS) model is similar, with an added component of a nurse, and with the exception families eligible for EnHS have already been identified in the Child Welfare System.

Felitti's 2000 study, "Adverse Childhood Experiences", shows a direct correlation of children with adverse experiences with adult chronic diseases: diabetes, obesity, heart and lung disease, cancer, smoking, depression and suicide, leading to premature death. HSP 'nips it on the bud' by providing home-based services to overwhelmed parents and their vulnerable children with resources, early intervention for physical, behavioral health, and environmental risks.

The program is funded by the State Department of Health and suffering deep cuts at the peril of non-existence. I humbly ask you to search for provision for its continuity. We are hoping for the viability of the program once Federal funds and other private resources are available.

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Cynthia Koziolas, M.A.  
Director of Clinical Services  
[CynthiaK@mfss.org](mailto:CynthiaK@mfss.org)

## Testimony on HB 1354, Relating to Children

### House Finance Committee

Chair: Rep. Marcus Oshiro      Vice-Chair: Rep. Marilyn Lee

Tuesday, March 3, 2009, 4 p.m. Agenda #7, Room 308

By Howard S. Garval, President & CEO, Child & Family Service

We must protect our keiki from child abuse and not just after the fact when abuse has already occurred. Hawaii had the incredible foresight to recognize that child abuse prevention is a great investment to make when it invented Healthy Start back in 1984. By 2001 the program was deployed statewide. It has been replicated in over 30 states under Healthy Families America because other states recognize the value and efficacy of the program.

There are multiple reasons that Child & Family Service wholeheartedly endorses HB 1354. Let me outline these below:

- Healthy Start works. In FY 08 for families that stayed 12 months or more in the program, over 99% had **no** report of child abuse! This exceeds child abuse rates that are higher nationally and in Hawaii.
- Healthy Start works with families in which at least one parent is at substantial risk of abusing and/or neglecting her/his baby/child. A scientifically validated checklist called the Kempe Family Stress Checklist is used to determine parental risk of child abuse. Only those families who score at a high enough level (scores of 30 and above) are referred to Healthy Start. Therefore, the program is working with high risk families and getting a terrific result as noted above.
- In Hawaii, Johns Hopkins University has been evaluating the program for many years. This has led to significant program improvements/enhancements that have strengthened the program. It also has helped to define a group of “anxious” mothers for whom Healthy Start has been very effective. For these moms, Healthy Start helped reduce child

abuse by 60% and child neglect by 56%. This longitudinal evaluation was done using a control group which is the most valid form of evaluation.

- For a cost of \$3,000 per family, Healthy Start served over 4,000 families in FY 08. Estimates are that without Healthy Start services, 13% of the children would end up being abused. If one assumes 4,000 children who would be at risk if Healthy Start is eliminated, then 13% of that is 520 children who are likely to be abused. If you were to add up child welfare services costs including investigation, foster care, mental health treatment, potential future juvenile delinquency and school dropouts, the costs to the state would be substantial and would likely wipe out any savings achieved through program elimination.
- Hawaii would also walk away from **\$4.5 million** if Healthy Start is eliminated. Healthy Start bills under the Early Intervention Special Funds and draws down about **\$1.5 million** in Federal Medicaid reimbursement each year. Also, **\$.5 million** would be lost that comes in to the state from CAPTA and is allocated to the Children's Trust Fund managed by the Hawaii Community Foundation. Because of Hawaii's success in Healthy Start in having a research partner (Johns Hopkins University) with the Maternal Child Health Branch of the Department of Health, DOH recently was awarded a highly competitive grant from the Federal government of **\$2.5 million** over 5 years. If Healthy Start is eliminated, the state would be walking away from a total of **\$4.5 million** in revenue from other sources other than the state.
- While the state faces a significant budget shortfall, it makes no sense to eliminate a successful program where the cost to the state will only be higher if the services are no longer provided. Even reducing the program makes more sense than outright elimination. This ultimately would lead to fewer families being served and will heighten the risk of child abuse for some children, but is less damaging than no services at all to this high risk population.
- Very few programs that the state funds can match the rigorous evaluation and research that Healthy Start has had. Nationally there is growing

research that documents the effectiveness and importance of home visiting programs in preventing child abuse. Even if Healthy Start is not perfect, this does not explain elimination. In fact if the state accepts the \$2.5 million from the recently awarded grant, Healthy Start can be strengthened even further so it can be even more effective.

- In addition to preventing child abuse, Healthy Start achieves certain other important outcomes such as: ensuring the family has a medical home, providing prenatal care for subsequent pregnancies for Healthy Start parents, performing developmental screening for a high percentage of one year olds and two year olds. Since children with special needs are at considerably higher risk of child abuse, it is important that special needs are identified early and referrals can then be made to appropriate service providers.
- While the Governor is to be applauded for trying to prevent layoffs of state employees, HB 1354 could soften the impact of or actually prevent layoffs in the nonprofit organizations that provide Healthy Start services throughout the state of Hawaii. Eliminating Healthy Start would result in the layoffs of 200 employees statewide among the six providers of Healthy Start services. Our estimate of the unemployment costs would be \$2.4 million. This assumes a mix of paraprofessional and professional staff who would be laid off statewide if the program is eliminated with an estimated \$300+ in unemployment payments to paraprofessionals and \$545/week for professionals for 30 weeks under the new federal extension of unemployment benefits.
- There is no equivalent or duplicative program to Healthy Start. Enhanced Healthy Start only gets involved when the family is an active CWS case and abuse and/or neglect has already occurred. Therefore, if Healthy Start is eliminated, at least 4,000 families in Hawaii who are at risk of child abuse and neglect will not receive services. There is no other program that would pick up these families and it is likely that the family won't be known unless they end up as a Child Protection case with CWS or when the children are ready to enter school. By then, if there was abuse and/or neglect, the

trauma and damage to the child(ren) will have already occurred and it will be more expensive to treat.

For all of the reasons stated above, Child & Family Service strongly supports HB 1354 that restores funding through state general operating funds and TANF funds to the Healthy Start Home Visiting program. We can continue to intervene early to prevent child abuse and strengthen families, or we can pick up the pieces only after abuse and/or neglect has occurred when the damage is already done that may have lifelong consequences for children. I urge you to opt for the former by restoring funding to the highly successful Healthy Start program.

To: representative John Mizuno, Chair  
Representative Tom Brower, Vice Chair  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

From; Eric Paryno, University of Hawaii Student, MSW Program

Subject: HB 1354 Keiki Caucus; Healthy Start; Enhanced Healthy Start; Appropriation

Description: Appropriates temporary assistance for needy families funds and general revenue funds for the healthy start and enhanced healthy start programs, to maintain current services, to hire additional staff and for provider training.

Dear Representative Mizuno,

I am currently a MSW student at the University of Hawaii. I am in support of HB1354 to provide funds for the Healthy Start and Enhanced Healthy Start Programs.

Healthy Start serves as a preventative program to serve "at risk" families. The program was designed to prevent child abuse and neglect by providing support to the family. This program promotes child development, parenting skills and links families to community resources.

With access to community resources and clinical services provided by healthy start, families increase their knowledge and skills to create a healthy child-rearing environment. This environment will decrease the chances to child abuse and neglect.

With lay offs and other financial hardships, at risk families are in greater need for support. Healthy Start provides those needs to increase proper child development. If the allocated funds from TANF are cut, this will cause strain on the at risk families. Please consider allocating those funds to healthy start to continue service to those families.

Sincerely,

Eric Parayno

Testimony of Camille Rockett  
Masters of Social Work student, University of Hawaii at Manoa  
Before the House Committee on Finance  
March 3, 2009

My name is Camille Rockett, and I'm an MSW student at UH Manoa. I am testifying in support of HB1354 HD1.

This state cannot afford to eliminate such a crucial program for our *keiki*. Healthy Start is not just abuse prevention. The ultimate goals of this program are to minimize the risk factors and maximize the protective factors that influence the children in our communities. The current clients in Healthy Start are results of generational inequality, poverty, and injustice toward people of Hawaiian and other local ethnic heritage. There is significant socioeconomic and racial/ethnic stratification in our state. The haves are very distinct from the have nots. Eliminating Healthy Start only takes more from those who don't *have* in our state.

Instead of eliminating much needed developmental, educational, and financial assistance to our needy families, this state should be supporting the next generation of citizens and leaders. We have a responsibility to right the wrongs of our history, to give as much as we can to our struggling mothers and children, and to not only keep this program running, but to provide better service than we do.

Both Healthy Start and Enhanced are now operating under distressing conditions. The frontline workers have lost the staff that had cared for them and supported them, advised them, and advocated for their families in the first round of budget cuts in August. Morale is very low in offices, but FSWs continue to go out into their neighborhoods and serve their families. The program has lost essential staff in Clinical Specialists, MSWs, and Child Development Specialists as well, in a time that calls for more qualified professionals that can implement evidence based interventions. It is not an easy job to come to work every day, working with the poorest of poor families, in neighborhoods filled with drugs and crime, and know that the state doesn't value your service. To know that you could lose your job any day, but to still show up and give all you can to your clients is the most difficult thing I have experienced in my working career. You are lucky to have such dedicated and selfless workers making up this program.

These workers from Catholic Charities HS received their month's notice on Friday. I feel deeply that the state is making a mistake by eliminating this program. The state must take a stand for what is right. It is not right for local children to lose access to such valuable education and risk prevention. It is not right for the state to value the rich and take from the poor. It is not right to put more caring, educated, and devoted tax payers out of work in this difficult time. I implore you to do what is right for the next generation of children. Please save Healthy Start.

Testimony from 2/5/09 for HB 1354.

This bill would prevent the elimination of the Healthy Start program in Hawaii. Healthy Start is a home visiting program for at risk families with children ages 0-3. This program promotes child development, healthy parent child interaction, and is a link between families and early intervention services. **Healthy Start also provides parents with clinical therapy services and access to resources like food, clothing, diapers, toys, books, housing assistance, emergency utilities assistance, and employment seeking information.** These families need so much more than parenting classes. **Eliminating Healthy Start would inhibit access to such resources for a segment of our community which is at the highest risk for poverty, child abuse and neglect, and developmental delays.**

I strongly support the need for more specialists and more training for home visitors. The needs of these families are so diverse and so extreme that this program needs more funding, more evidence based practice, more structure, and more support from our state.

As a Family Support Worker in Wahiawa's Healthy Start Program, I have seen that Healthy Start is essential to the livelihood of many families. One mother with four children was saved from an unlawful eviction by her corrupt landlord, due to her FSW. One of our mothers would not leave her house with her son for over a year, but due to the outreach of her worker, started coming to group meetings and finally realized that her two year old was severely delayed compared to other children. Because of this, she was able to receive a diagnosis and a skills trainer for her son through Early Intervention. I have personally helped families access food, diapers, and child development material that they would have otherwise gone without. I have advocated to save my client's baby's life when the doctors and nurses at the NICU seemed to be forcing her to take him off his ventilator. I have also assisted a homeless family to find housing and get help with their deposit, while seeing how regular visits and development information helped their baby progress from failure to thrive to thriving and beginning to meet milestones. I hate to think what would have happened to these children without our Wahiawa program. This program makes a real difference in real families here in our communities.

These families are living right on the brink of losing their housing or going without food. There are no other programs that will meet these families where they are and provide access to such a diverse pool of resources. As stated in the Senate bill, "Children's brains are almost ninety per cent developed by age three, and to a great extent their earliest experiences define their adult functional capacities." We must not wait until these families are homeless, overburdened, and starving to provide intervention. We cannot wait until abuse or disability occurs to send in family support workers. We must increase the support we give to our struggling families and pass HB741.

March 2, 2009

To: Representative John M. Mizuno  
Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services

Date of Hearing: March 3, 2009

Time of Hearing: 4:00 PM

Place: House Conference Room 308

Re: HB1354 Relating to Children

Representative Mizuno, Representative Brower and members of the House Committee on Human Services, my name is Georgia Clariza and I am a Masters in Social Work student at University of Hawaii, Manoa. I am testifying in SUPPORT of HB 1354 Relating to Children.

If there is a strong correlation between “childhood abuse and school failure, delinquency, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, crime and homelessness, and that research confirms the positive impact of an abuse-free, stable and nurturing environment on a child’s physical and psychological development,” then shouldn’t we take every effort to ensure that a program that fosters family functioning, promotes child development and enhances positive parenting skills in order to reduce the risk of child maltreatment continues to deliver services to our growing population of children and families in need (HB 1354 Measure Text, 2009)?

As a personal example, I am currently doing my practicum where we assist at-risk youth. However, there are only a staff of 3 case managers and 1 intern to deal with about 350 to 400 youth participants. The biggest struggle for me is, “how do we effectively provide services to these youths when each case managers handle about 100 other clients?” Therefore, I believe, that it is important to appropriate funds to maintain current services and to provide training, but especially to hire additional staff to ensure that every child who is not given the appropriate nurture and care to develop into a self-sufficient, self-actualized adult, do not “fall into the cracks.” In a highly industrialized nation and in a time where “hope” is the rallying cry, to neglect our children because of lack of financial support would be the biggest injustice.

Therefore, I urge you to support HB1354. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Georgia Clariza  
(808) 354-0667

**FINTestimony**

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**From:** Colleen Welty [Colleen@mfss.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 02, 2009 9:37 AM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony in favor of HB 1354

Dear Legislators, Please support this bill and include funding for Healthy Start and Enhanced Healthy Start. These 2 programs work well side by side, with families able to move from one to the other as they accomplish their goals (getting a job, education, taking parenting classes, learning new ways to relate to their children without shaking, hitting or yelling at them, getting hooked-up with community services, etc). Both Healthy Start and Enhanced Healthy Start save the State many dollars because they get in the homes right from the birth of the child, to prevent problems before they become major and more expensive. Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration of the benefits in the "long run".

Colleen Welty  
328 Hololani Str.  
Pukalani, HI 98768

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**FINTestimony**

**From:** Antoinette M. Rodrigues [rodrigues@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 02, 2009 9:44 AM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** cynthiak@mfss.org; colleen@mfss.org; cynthial@mfss.org; jani@mfss.org  
**Subject:** Testimony in favor of HB 1354 HD1

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing this letter in favor of HB 1354 HD1, specifically, to request you to continue funding the Healthy Start Program at Maui Family Support Services.

Studies show that it effectively prevents child abuse and neglect in families participating in the program for at least a year. With the economy creating more stress for Maui County families, now, more than ever, we need to keep this essential program. Maui, Molokai and Lanai do not have the resources that people living on Oahu can readily access. The loss of Healthy Start will have devastating consequences for our island communities. It is the only program of its kind.

Family Support Workers visit families on a regular basis to provide child development information for parents of keiki ages 0-3 years of age. They also assist with parent education and family planning; and child care referrals for parents in school or reentering the work force. Family Support Workers call upon Child Development Specialists to help the family if a child's growth is under par and help the child get services to achieve developmental milestones. If a mother appears to be suffering from postpartum depression, domestic violence or substance abuse, they can consult with a Clinical Specialist to help her get these services.

Without Healthy Start in Maui County, I anticipate:

- 1.) An increase in untreated mental health problems--contributing to a number of tragic consequences--including more suicides.
- 2.) An increase in untreated developmental delays in infants, leading to a need for more special education services when the child enters school.
- 3.) More substance abuse and more domestic violence; and more medical and legal problems for the State to pay for.
- 4.) More child abuse and neglect; again, an increase in the need for medical and legal intervention; and perhaps tragically, an increase in infant mortality.

It seems to me that the State is faced with the following choice: **either pay now for preventing these problems—or pay later for more expensive intervention and treatment programs.** (e.g., foster care, out of the home placement and residential treatment programs; along with increased legal and medical costs to the State.)

You have the power to prevent a lot of needless suffering for the future constituents of Maui County. Please continue to fund Healthy Start!

Sincerely,

*Antoinette Rodrigues, MA*

35 Holomakani Drive  
 Kula, Hawaii 96790  
 Home: 808.878.1651  
 Cell: 808.264.9392

## **FINTestimony**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 02, 2009 10:28 AM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** weltys@mauigateway.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB1354 on 3/3/2009 4:00:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 3/3/2009 4:00:00 PM HB1354

Conference room: 308  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Colleen Welty  
Organization: Individual  
Address: 328 Hololani Str. Pukalani, HI 96768  
Phone:  
E-mail: weltys@mauigateway.com  
Submitted on: 3/2/2009

**Comments:**

Please support HB1354 and include funding for both Healthy Start and Enhanced Healthy Start. These 2 programs work hand in hand to help keep families out of more expensive and more extensive services "down the line". Helping families early on during their parenting journey is a win-win situation for them and for the State. Mahalo.