

# Resolution

No. \_\_\_\_\_

LATE

## URGING SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED STATE FUNDING FOR THE HAWAII HEALTHY START PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Hawaii's Healthy Start (HHS) program is a nationally recognized program that promotes child health and development by developing positive parenting skills; and

WHEREAS, the HHS program provides essential support and services to at-risk families with newborns to reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment; and

WHEREAS, the HHS program encourages parents to be involved and connected with their children, giving them a strong foundation for early learning and establishing healthy behaviors; and

WHEREAS, the HHS program, through Maui Family Support Services, Inc., has been effectively helping Hawaii's at-risk families for over 20 years; and

WHEREAS, according to the State Department of Human Services' data for 2007, 99 percent of families participating in the HHS program for at least six months have no confirmed reports of child abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, funding for the HHS program will lower costs for the State in the areas of health care, medical costs, special education, treatment of child abuse, domestic abuse, substance abuse, and crime; and

WHEREAS, the HHS program is an effective tool to protect our most vulnerable young residents by strengthening families devastated by these difficult economic times; and

WHEREAS, the proposed economic stimulus plan passed by the United States House of Representatives includes significant funds for various programs, such as Medicaid, which should allow for continued funding of this most worthy program; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it hereby urges the Governor and the Hawaii State legislators to provide full funding for the Healthy Start program; and

Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

2. That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Linda Lingle, Governor, State of Hawaii; the Members of the State Senate; the Members of the State House of Representatives; and the Honorable Charmaine Tavares, Mayor, County of Maui.

pa:fkt:09-017a

# JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

School of Medicine  
Division of General Pediatrics

LATE

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February 10, 2009

Regarding: SB 791

Position: Support

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Hawaii's Healthy Start Program (HSP) is a public health prevention program that is integrated within a broader system of care to support and sustain disadvantaged families and children. Research has established that prevention programs save lives, prevent child maltreatment and support child health, development, and school readiness. The same programs save taxpayer dollars by preventing school failure, delinquency, and incarceration in children growing up in families experiencing economic hardship and stress. Hawaii's Healthy Start Program is an evidence-based, public health program that addresses child well being across multiple dimensions. It is appropriately housed in the Department of Health and should not be eliminated.

Funding for the HSP will save state resources by supporting overburdened families' ability to care for and nurture their children. Data from research completed here in Hawaii with the Healthy Start Program show that for anxious mothers, HSP participation produced a 60% decrease in substantiated child maltreatment, and a 54% decrease in neglectful behavior toward the child. Additionally, the children of anxious mothers performed better on academic tests of achievement in grade 1 than did children in the control group.

The HSP has one of the strongest practice-research partnerships in the country. Many service programs in Hawaii and across the nation have limited objective evidence of how services are delivered and the results achieved. In contrast, the HSP has a 15-year track record of research-based program improvement. The HSP practice-research partnership has provided solid evidence of the program's accomplishments and a solid understanding of how to improve program practice to have even greater impact for more families. This approach is exactly the approach used in medicine, where modifications in treatment are carefully studied and changes made to reduce side effects and increase recovery for greater numbers of patients. This approach is our best opportunity to address the disproportionate representation of Native Hawaiian and other groups in the child welfare system. Investing in the HSP will turn the tide on school failure

and the subsequent cycle of economic hardship and health problems linked to the experience of adversity in early childhood.

Recently, the Department of Health, Maternal Child Health Branch was awarded a 5-year, 2.5 million dollar grant from the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to enhance the quality, impact and sustainability of the HSP in preventing child maltreatment. The application process was highly competitive; only 17 sites were funded nationally. It is important to note two of the many strengths mentioned by ACF regarding Hawaii's application. First, the strong collaboration of state agencies, community providers, and an independent research team was noted as a model for best practice in the prevention of child maltreatment and promotion of child health development. Second, the HSP's history of careful review of both practice and outcomes and its honest dissemination of findings were noted to have informed the work of similar programs across the nation.

I strongly support funding for the HSP. The program accurately identifies families who are most in need of support. By strengthening these families, HSP prevents child maltreatment and promotes child health and development. This, in turn, strengthens our state economy and future workforce. Prevention is the best solution to our current economic challenges.

Attached is a document summarizing key literature on home visiting programs in general and on the Healthy Start Program in particular. I have been deeply concerned regarding the misuse of data and the many misconception regarding HSP data. I hope this document sets the record straight. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the HSP and prevention science with you. I can be reached at (808) 949-0057 or via email at [emcfarl2@jhmi.edu](mailto:emcfarl2@jhmi.edu).

With Aloha,

Elizabeth McFarlane, PhD, MPH  
Assistant Director,  
Early Childhood Research

It was recently announced that Healthy Start would be eliminated from the state budget. Since then, there has been much discussion about this policy decision. It is important that such discussion be based on a clear understanding of what has been learned from 20 years of research on Healthy Start and other home visiting programs. This summary focuses on six key points. We welcome the opportunity to expand on these for interested stakeholders. Our contact information is at the end of this memo.

- 1. There is strong evidence and national consensus that home visiting can prevent child maltreatment and improve family functioning, parenting, and child health and development.**
  - Adverse early experiences have serious, long-term health consequences.<sup>1</sup>
  - Meta-analytic studies and the CDC's systematic review demonstrate the value of home visiting *both* to prevent child maltreatment and to promote family functioning, child health and child development.<sup>2,3</sup>
  - The Administration for Children and Families is investing over \$10 million nationally to help states adopt evidence-based home visiting models like Healthy Start.<sup>4</sup>
  
- 2. While our experimental study of Healthy Start found modest *overall* impact for most outcomes<sup>5,6</sup>, it revealed substantial benefits for a key subset of targeted families.<sup>7-9</sup>**
  - Benefits extended to both mothers and children.
  - Benefits were sustained years after families had been in HSP.
  - Benefits extended across a range of health, parenting and child developmental outcomes. These benefits translate to cost savings for health, welfare and educational services. For example, in this subset of the targeted families:
    - o 31% of HSP mothers vs. 68% of control mothers were depressed.
    - o 9% of HSP families vs. 20% of control families had a substantiated CAN report by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
    - o 32% of HSP children vs. 54% of control children scored below norms for academic achievement.
  
- 3. The experimental study also showed ways to improve Healthy Start<sup>5,6,10-12</sup>. In the past decade, Healthy Start has worked on many of these and has tested its results.**
  - Examples of actions taken include adding professional staff to the Healthy Start team, improving training for home visitors and supervisors, and adopting a single parenting curriculum. Some actions have been successful; some have not. As with *all* services, there is more work to do.
  - The Department of Health has laid out a plan to improve Healthy Start further and has secured \$2.5 million from the Administration for Children and Families to carry out the plan. This project will improve: targeting of families, staff training and supervision, integration of child abuse prevention with promotion of health and development, and program capacity for continuous quality improvement.
  
- 4. The challenges faced by HSP are common to programs around the country.**
  - The Nurse-Family Partnership model, for example, is most effective for a subset of the families it targets,<sup>13</sup> is not effective in improving outcomes for another subset of families<sup>14</sup> and has found it challenging to achieve fidelity when taken to scale.<sup>15</sup>
  - The burgeoning field of 'implementation science' is becoming a major focus of Federal agencies and national foundations. Its purpose is to use science to improve the fidelity and effectiveness of evidence-based interventions.<sup>16</sup> Hawaii is well positioned to tap into implementation science funding.
  
- 5. HSP's practice-research partnership is a highly regarded national model. Its work has advanced the fields of child abuse prevention and early childhood development not only within the state, but nationally.**
  - The HSP study of fathers<sup>17</sup> was the 2005 recipient of the Herbert Raskin Child Welfare Pro Humanitate Literary Award for "authors who exemplify the intellectual integrity and moral courage required to transcend political and social barriers to champion "best practice" in the field of child welfare.
  - The country's major child abuse and neglect journal commissioned commentaries to accompany HSP reports.<sup>18,19</sup> The commentaries make it clear that home visiting should be further developed as a prevention strategy and that Hawaii's practice-research partnership is a model for how to do this.

6. **The Department of Health, the network of HSP providers, and scientists have worked together to improve HSP. They have brought substantial resources to Hawaii to test changes carefully and to take successful solutions to scale statewide.**
- Research distinguishes which activities have improved HSP and which have been less successful. By using research, the Department of Health has shown what works and what needs more work.
  - Quality improvement is costly. Since 1993, the HSP practice-research partnership has secured over \$10 million in funding from federal agencies and national foundations for this important work.
  - **Beyond this, in September 2009, the Administration for Children and Families awarded the Department of Health \$2.5 million over 5 years specifically to address HSP's most important issues. This is an unprecedented opportunity to expand HSP's effectiveness in improving family functioning, preventing child maltreatment, and promoting child health and development. We are eager to start this important work.**

<sup>1</sup> Middlebrooks JS, Audage NC. The Effects of Childhood Stress on Health across the Lifespan. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Sweet, M. A. & Applebaum, M. I. (2004). Is home visiting an effective strategy? A meta-analytic review of home visiting programs for families with young children. *Child Development*, 75, 1435-56.

<sup>3</sup> Bilukha, O., Hahn, R. A., Crosby, A., Fullilove, M. T., Liberman, A., Moscicki, E., et al. (2005). The effectiveness of early childhood home visitation in preventing violence. A systematic review. *Am J of Preventative Med*, 28, 11-39.

<sup>4</sup> Administration for Children and Families. (2008). Supporting Evidence-Based Home Visitation Programs to Prevent Child Maltreatment, Funding Opportunity No. HHS-2008-ACF-ACYF-CA-0130. [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants\\_archive.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_archive.html)

<sup>5</sup> Duggan, A. K., McFarlane, E., Fuddy, L., Burrell, L., Higman, S. M., Windham, A., et al. (2004). Randomized trial of a statewide home visiting program to prevent child abuse: Impact in preventing child abuse and neglect. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28, 597-622.

<sup>6</sup> Duggan, A., Fuddy, L., Burrell, L., Higman, S. M., McFarlane, E., Windham, A. et al. (2004). Randomized trial of a statewide home visiting program to prevent child abuse: Impact in reducing parental risk factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28, 623-643.

<sup>7</sup> McFarlane, E. & Duggan, A. Summary of Current Work. Memo to Dr. Fukino, May 14, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> McFarlane, E., Burrell, Derauf, D.C., Fuddy L., & Duggan, A. (2008a, May). *Home visiting for at-risk families of newborns: Association of maternal and home visitor attachment security with engagement*. Presented at the annual meetings of the Pediatric Academic Societies, Honolulu, HI.

<sup>9</sup> McFarlane, E., Burrell, L., Leaf, P., Fuddy L., Sia, C., Derauf, D.C., & Duggan, A. (2008b, May). *Maternal relationship security as a moderator of home visiting impact*. Presented at the annual meetings of the Pediatric Academic Societies, Honolulu, HI.

<sup>10</sup> Duggan AK, Windham AM, McFarlane EY, Salkever D, Rohde C, Rosenberg L, Buchbinder S, Fuddy L and Sia C. (1999) Evaluation of Hawaii's Healthy Start Program. In: *The Future of Children: Home Visiting, Recent Program Evaluations*. 9(1):66-90.

<sup>11</sup> Duggan A, Windham A, McFarlane E, Fuddy L, Rohde C, Buchbinder S et al. (2000). Hawaii's Healthy Start Program of home visiting for at-risk families: Evaluation of family identification, family engagement and service delivery. *Pediatrics*, 105:250-259. PMID: 10617732

<sup>12</sup> Duggan AK, Fuddy L, McFarlane E, Burrell L, Windham A, Higman SM & Sia C. (2004). Evaluating a statewide home visiting program to prevent child abuse in at-risk families of newborns: Fathers' participation and outcomes. *Child Maltreatment*, 9:3-17. PMID: 14870994

<sup>13</sup> Olds DL, Henderson CR, Chamberlin R, & Tatelbaum, R. (1986). Preventing child abuse and neglect: A randomized trial of nurse home visitation. *Pediatrics*, 78, 65-78.

<sup>14</sup> Eckenrode, J., Ganzel, B., Henderson, C. R., Smith, E., Olds, D. L., Powers, J., Cole, R., Kitzman, H., & Sidora, K. (2000). Preventing child abuse and neglect with a program of nurse home visitation: The limiting effects of domestic violence. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 284, 1385-1391.

<sup>15</sup> Ingoldsby E, Olds D, Baca P, Pinto F, and Luckey D. Implementing a client retention intervention in a prevention program. Presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual NIH Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation. Bethesda, MD, January 28, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> National Institutes of Health. 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual NIH Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation: Building Research Capacity to Bridge the Gap from Science to Service. Bethesda, MD. January 28-29, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Chaffin M. (2004) Is it time to rethink Healthy Start/Healthy Families? *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28:589-595.

<sup>18</sup> Gomby D. (2007) The promise and limitations of home visiting: Implementing effective programs. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 31, 793-799.

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**PACT**

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*A Family Service Agency*

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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

INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

KANEOHE COMMUNITY  
FAMILY CENTER

KPT FAMILY CENTER

OHIA - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
SHELTER

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



Child Welfare League of America



Aloha United Way



COA

**TO:** Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

**FROM:** Ruthann Quitiquit, CEO  
Parents And Children Together

**DATE:** February 10, 2009

LATE

**SUBJECT:** SB 791 – Relating to Children

I have come to testify today to request that you vote in support of SB 791, a bill supporting an appropriation for Healthy Start. Parents And Children Together (PACT), along with five other providers, has been privileged to provide Healthy Start services within Hawaii since 1988. Through these years, PACT and the other Healthy Start agencies have saved lives, stopped abuse, assisted families in becoming better parents, assured quality health care for at-risk children, and has guaranteed that our State has made a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of parents and children.

With the recent decision of the Department of Health, supported by the Governor, this long standing and effective program will close its doors on June 30, 2009, if not sooner. How and why this decision was made to unilaterally target Healthy Start without any discussion with providers, Legislators, and community stakeholders, is a question that continues to be asked. Certainly neither the Governor nor the Director of Health have any obligation to discuss this matter before their decision was announced. However, in view of the fact that Healthy Start is a very long-standing program, that is has been replicated across the United States, and it has had the tremendous support of many Legislators for the past 20 plus years, it might have been beneficial to openly discuss this decision.

The answer from the Director of Health and the Governor regarding the defunding of Healthy Start is always, "It is not effective in stopping child abuse and neglect". However, research from John Hopkins University found the program to be a successful secondary prevention model for the population that Healthy Start serves. Although I respect and admire Dr. Fukino and Governor Lingle for many of their administrative decisions, I am at a loss to understand this decision.

Senator Chun-Oakland  
Senator Ige  
Page 2

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this very vital and important service. I strongly urge you to support SB 791 in order to continue to make a difference in the lives of at-risk families in Hawaii.



Blueprint  
FOR Change

TESTIMONY  
ON

LATE

SB 791 RELATING TO CHILDREN  
SENATE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH

February 10, 2009

1:15 am

Room 016

Aloha Chair Chun-Oakland and Chair Ige, Blueprint for Change, a non-profit organization whose mission is to help improve the States' Child Welfare System **supports** SB 791. BFC's is interested in this bill because it relates to efforts to invest in the proper development of children so that they become strong, productive, contributing human being.

For the past 10 years, BFC, using TANF funds under a contract with the Department of Human Services, has worked to establish a state-wide series of family strengthening walk-in facilities, called Neighborhood Places, that provide support and strengthening services to family who may be at risk of child abuse and neglect. Neighborhood Places' staff are truly special individuals who work hard at diverting these families away from being engaged with the State's Child Welfare System. Through the training and resources they provide, families become stronger, more able to withstand the stresses that come with financial hardship and crises, and they become more self-sufficient and less dependent on State assistance in the long term.

These prevention/diversion services save the State millions of dollars every year. As an example, for families who become engaged in the system, the State is frequently forced to pay thousands of dollars to cover the costs of placing the children into foster care. The monetary and societal cost increase exponentially when there are serious incidences of child abuse and/or neglect occurring in the family. Studies have clearly shown that children who are victims of abuse are much more likely to drop out of school, partake in dangerous and illegal activities, become incarcerated, and eventually become abusers themselves, thus continuing the endless cycle.

Like the Neighborhood Place programs, Healthy Start identifies and provides support and strengthening services to young families who may be at risk for various reasons of not being able to properly care for the basic needs of their newborn child.

We, who are funded by DHS with TANF dollars, consider Healthy Start a valuable, front-end prevention program that contributes to the health and welfare and proper development of children by providing key support services to young parents that may be at risk of neglecting their development needs. It helps keep these families from ever needing the services of the Neighborhood Places.

We strongly urge passage of SB 791. The loss of Healthy Start will leave a major hole in our safety net at a time when we need to shore it up. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

LATE

LATE

Aloha Committee Members and thank you for your time and attention in the urgent and critical matter of ensuring Healthy Start services remain available for our Hawaii children and families.

My name is Jani Sheppard and I am the CEO of Maui Family Support Services, Inc. I am here with community members and individuals who have received services, allowed the Healthy Start staff into their homes and into their lives, to provide the critical services the program offers. Moloka'i. Maui Family Support Services provides Healthy Start on Maui, Moloka'i and Lana'i. You have written testimony from community members from the islands of Molokai' and Lana'i including the Resolution approved unanimously from the Maui County Council urging support from the legislators and Governor for the Healthy Start program. .

Please know that we as advocates for children and families and specifically the excellent Healthy Start program, are keenly aware that these are at minimum, difficult time and that difficult decisions have to be made. Yesterday, we received word that this devastating decision may even become effective before June 30, 2009. We acknowledge and accept that as members of a community all have to give a little to ensure the health of our community. That why the Healthy Start providers have come together to re-design the program to ensure the effective an evidenced-based services while reducing the number served to ensure the program remains so that when economic time get better, we have a core program on which to build.

In August 2008, the \$4 mil cut to DOH services resulted in a \$1.9 mil cut in funding from Healthy Start. For Maui County families this meant a cut of over \$500,000 to the Healthy Start services. 19 employees were affected. 1/3 of the staff from Moloka'i lost their jobs in a community where their family members were also losing jobs after the close of the Ranch and other economic challenges for the island. On Maui, another 7 staff members were laid off and 5 had their hours reduced from full time to part time. Instead of having the staff to serve over 250 families, 180 families now receive service as a result of these cuts. We currently understand the need to make difficult decisions for the good of the whole and the need for everyone to do their part until we as a community can come out on the other side of these challenging, stressful, and in some cases dire economic times. We understand and accept a cut in funding but eliminating this program means another 200 jobs statewide and another 4000 families that will not receive services.

The argument has been made that the program should be cut because it is voluntary. Most of the Department of Health programs are voluntary and it simply means that they are not mandated. By the time services is mandated, harm has

morning and boarded a plane with me just so that they could share their thoughts with you re: Healthy Start and their heartfelt concerns about the elimination of the services.

Again, I thank you for your time and attention and applaud you for your work and commitment during a time of challenge we have not seen for decades....

Respectfully,

L. Jani Sheppard  
Chief Executive Officer  
Maui Family Support Services, Inc.  
Maui, Moloka'i and Lana'i

# *Ho'oikaika Partnership*



LATE

Aloha Kākou Committee members,

The *Ho'oikaika Partnership* was conceived through member agencies whose **primary mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect or support those prevention efforts.** Ho'oikaika's intention is to provide awareness and opportunities amongst agency members to create concrete collaborations, strengthen connections with one another, along with the families they serve.

Although this partnership is Maui-based, its membership spans over a range of our community's social services agencies. Some of the notable agencies include Maui Family Support Services, Neighborhood Place of Wailuku, Maui Economic Opportunity – Head Start, The Friends of the Children's Justice Center and many more prevention agencies.

There is no membership fee to join. Meetings are held once a month which also showcases a pre-determined member agency that is provided an opportunity to disseminate information about their organization's primary prevention services and programs. Those alone, enable Ho'oikaika partnering agencies to gain awareness of member organizations and are empowered to be better educated and resourceful in their professional, as well as personal lives.

Recently, we have been talking in great length about the imposing cuts to the Healthy Start Program now being offering on Maui by Maui Family Support Services. Being a partnership whose primary focus is prevention, we all know the value that Healthy Start brings to our families and our communities. The thought of this program's funding being eliminated by the State cause great concern to the effects it will have on all of our programs as well. The negative ramifications of this gap in our services that include early identification and early intervention will have a domino effect on the rest of us that we don't believe the State Department of Health is really looking at.

Our Maui County Council just passed a Resolution in support of Healthy Start's funding outlining a number of reasons why we are strongly urging you to ensure funding for Healthy Start and support SB 791.

- Healthy Start is the only home visiting service for child abuse prevention in Maui County and it has provided services for over 28 years.

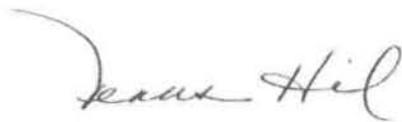
*“Ho'okāhi ka 'ilau like ana.”  
Wield the paddles together – work together.*

- Research has shown the Hawaii Healthy Start produced a 60% decrease in substantiated child maltreatment and a 54% decrease in neglectful behavior toward the child.
- 99.3% of families participating in Healthy Start for a year are NOT confirmed for child abuse or neglect.
- The Federal Government has chosen Hawaii Healthy Start as a model program for best practices in the prevention of child maltreatment.
- David McClain, former UH President, conducted a study and found a 3:1 cost benefit of Healthy Start over child welfare and other short term services. National studies range from 4:1 to 7:1.
- Research has established that prevention programs save lives, prevent child maltreatment, promote child health, development and school readiness, and that these same programs save tax payer dollars by preventing school failure, delinquency, and incarceration in children growing up in families experiencing disadvantage and stress.

It is a critical time for our families in this economic downfall to have concrete support in their time of need. As we strive as a community to bring our services together, we ask for our State's support in standing with us in our collaborative efforts to serve our families and our children of Hawai'i.

PLEASE – SUPPORT THIS BILL. TO CUT OUT HEALTHY START WOULD COST US MILLIONS MORE THAT IS SAVED FROM THIS PROVEN PROGRAM. *Mahalo nui loa!*

No na 'ohana,



Venus Rosete-Hill, Ho'oikaika Partnership Chairperson  
 Executive Director  
 Neighborhood Place of Wailuku  
 (808)986-0700

“Ho'okāhi ka 'ilau like ana.”  
*Wield the paddles together – work together.*

Dear Legislators,

LATE

I want to testify on behalf of the Healthy Start program and support SB791.

Governor Lingle stumped on the issue of child abuse prevention and Healthy Start when she ran against Cayetano. Now community members, including pediatricians, special needs providers, social workers and the families served are shocked to hear of the projected cuts for Healthy Start's preventive home visiting program!

An Evaluation of Hawaii's Healthy Start Program reported in The Future of Children 1999, that "Hawaii has been a national leader in developing and scaling up a model of paraprofessional home visitation targeted to at-risk families...Overall program efforts show that there has been no abuse for over 99% of families remaining in service for 12 months; that is a confirmed rate of less than 1.0% compared to 2.6% nationwide for children under age two. (Third National Incidence study)."

The Healthy Start program provides a voice for our most vulnerable population. Serving women and families that have newborns, infants and toddlers, Healthy Start keeps a safety net around the children from prenatal stages to 3 yrs old.

Housed under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Start is instrumental in identifying at risk families, connecting them to other available community resources, providing transportation to medical and social service appointments, addressing homelessness, depression, and domestic violence issues. The program promotes positive parenting skills, healthy child development in cognitive, physical and emotional areas, preparing children to enter preschool for healthy adult outcomes. It is a very important prevention program. Save Healthy Start!

*Tammy Ruiz*

*The Mission of Maui Family Support Services, Inc. is to promote healthy family functioning by providing supportive services which build on family strengths.*

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LATE

My name is Sarah Meyer. I am a mother of two young children and a former foster parent. I am a Masters in Social Work Student at University of Hawaii Manoa. I am studying child welfare under the state title IV program. I am currently doing my Practicum at Family Court where I meet with families on a daily basis who are facing court hearing addressing child abuse and neglect issues. Upon Graduation I will be working for the State of Hawaii as a Child Protective services worker. I have worked for over 15 years in early childhood education and family home visiting programs. Home visiting works with families. Meeting families in their homes not only provides an incentive for meeting with the worker it gives the worker an opportunity to connect with the family in their setting. A home visitor is able to more fully assess the family's needs and situation when they are meeting with the family on their turf rather than in a formal office setting. I support continued funding for Healthy Start. Hawaii's Healthy Start program is designed to promote healthy families and prevent child abuse and neglect. It has a proven track record of success serving families since 1975. The program supports child health and development in newborns and families at risk for poor child outcomes. It involves a home visitation program that provides families with comprehensive support encouraging linkages to educational, support and community services. Healthy Start has positive outcomes for the families it serves. Clients who have been involved Healthy Start report increased parenting skills and community service knowledge. The foundation of this program is prevention. By creating this catchment Healthy Start is identifying families who are at risk of child abuse and neglect and frontloading them with resources, education and support. When a family is identified they are provided with a home visitation worker and services are individually fashioned to the families needs.

Our State should continue to promote healthy families by taking a stance of early identification, prevention and promotion of safe children and healthy families. By promoting prevention for Hawaii's Keiki we are supporting safe and productive futures for our families. In our current economic times families are under greater stress from job loss, financial instability and emotional uncertainty. This is the very time to front load families with resources and strong role modeling to keep families on track and out of the child welfare system.

Even though our state has many early intervention programs without programs like Healthy Start that focus on early identification, families are at risk of falling through the cracks and not linking with the appropriate support services in their community. By keeping Healthy Start as a prevention program, Hawaii's families are given every opportunity to thrive.

LATE

Late  
SB 791

*Ruth from Guteguit dropped it off for here.*

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Michelle Tanaka. I really would like to give you insight on my story and express to you how beneficial Healthy Start really is. I've already been to the rally at the capitol and my son and I were also featured on the KHON 2 news broadcast as a strong advocate for the program. I am 20-year-old a single mother to my son Rhyder who is 2 years old. I also have another one on the way.

I began the program with the birth of my son Rhyder at Kapiolani Hospital. I was a little skeptical of what the program could do for me but soon enough, I would find out that it would be more than I could imagine. Being 17 and pregnant, was not ideal for my prideful Japanese family and I was disowned with only my dad and grandma to really support me. I did graduate high school with honors and went on to college full-time ( I'll be graduating next year) and I also have a part-time job at Aiea Bowl Restaurant. The father was a year younger and had all of the support of his family. He had no job and was still in high school. All of those around us, friends, neighbors, family, outsiders, doubted we would survive.

On our first home visit, I was introduced to my visitor Evalani Rodriguez. She let me know what we would be doing and how she could be of help. She would monitor Rhyder's development and also answer any questions I had as a new young mother. At the time, his father and I were struggling to get along and make ends meet and Eva really gave me a hand to hold as I was going through this transition. As time passed, we grew closer and Rhyder got older. I soon found out from talking to Eva that what I thought was a normal relationship was actually an abusive one and she immediately got me a specialist on Domestic Violence to talk to. I never would've known had it not been for Eva and the specialist. Numerous nights of fighting and crying, police calls and threats, I reached to Eva for some advice. The father and I were getting worse and although I had my friends the only I could really talk to was Eva. She told me it would be hard but we did not deserve this and that I needed to do what was best for Rhyder.

Around the time of Rhyder's first birthday, I decided I had enough after I found out that the father had cheated on me with a good friend and that the abuse would never stop because it did run in his family. In October 2007, I called it quits and Rhyder and I moved out of the father's house. We moved in with my grandma and began visits over there.

Eva knew that the father would react in anger and she could tell that I was having a hard time going through another big transition. So although Eva would be there to monitor Rhyder, she got me a visitor, Allison, who would specifically work with me to get through the good and bad times. Allison is somewhat like a counselor and definitely someone I could easily talk to. The visits with Eva and Allison helped so much with caring for Rhyder and learning how to take care of Rhyder as a single mother.

In November 2007, I met my current boyfriend and father to my second child and Eva and Allison both agreed that they could tell I was happy again. Allison went over questions to see if the relationship was healthy and that I was taking things slow. Allison helped me to decide if this was a equally beneficial relationship and she also help me to assess my life citing problems with my upbringing, father and other family. She helped me to figure out why I am the way I am today.

In December 2008, I was granted a TRO on Rhyder's father and won custody of Rhyder in January 2009(just last month.) Both of these significant events would not have been possible without their help and encouragement. They helped me to gather information about custody and domestic violence. They encouraged me to file for custody as a single mother. I won. I won because of them, my dad, my grandma, my boyfriend and many others.

I am the person I am today. I am happy to be this person. I am a mother. A daughter. A granddaughter. A girlfriend. A friend. A student. I proved the odds wrong. I am above the statistics that were thrown against me.

I am getting ready to be a mommy again and I have no doubt in my mind that Healthy Start will be there for me guiding me along the way.

Healthy Start was a blessing to me and to countless others. Healthy Start saved our family and many others. There are so many people being helped and there are many more that they could reach if people only knew. The only reason why I can see that anyone would want to cut something so beneficial is because they aren't directly affected by or lack the knowledge of understanding what Healthy Start really is about and what it does. They say they can really see the results or the benefits? Well, here I am. I am the proof that this program does work. They don't know the stories, the struggle, the emotions. The hard times, the memories and the sleepless nights. They don't what its like to be in situations like ours and feeling so alone waiting for some one to hear our cries for help/

Now you know my family and our story. Now you know what Healthy Start is and what it does. Please share this with others so that they too can learn what Healthy Start really is. We need to keep Healthy Start around. Maybe it can't benefit everyone, but it benefits enough people to really questions is it worth cutting. There are many stories out there waiting to be heard. The fact is: everyone is so busy with life that they never take the time to slow down and listen to the many voices waiting to be heard.

Ask yourself, Should we really consider cutting a program that is so beneficial? Should we cut based on what grounds? What facts? Have we heard both sides? Do the benefits outweigh the consequences? By how much? Should it matter?

CAN YOU REALLY PUT A PRICE ON SAVING AND HELPING CHILDREN AND HAWAII'S FAMILIES?

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this. I hope it will help in the many ways that I know it can.

Michelle Tanaka,