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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2778 SD1  
RELATING TO HEALTH**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Representative Ryan Yamane  
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair**

**Friday, March 16, 2012  
9:30 a.m. Room 329**

Chair Yamane, Vice-Chair Morikawa and members of the House Committee on Health, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 2778 SD 1, Relating to Health (HTH).

SB 2778 SD 1 supports Governor Abercrombie's priority for early childhood health. Early childhood is a time to establish good health habits and identify health, behavioral, and developmental conditions. One very serious public health problem is the dramatic rise of young children who are overweight and obese. In Hawaii, childhood obesity increased by 38 percent from 1999 and 2009. Sedentary lifestyles combined with an excess of poor dietary choices, including the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, contribute to the rapid and steady increase of obesity in Hawaii.

Studies have found that childhood obesity tends to persist into later life and increases the risk for chronic diseases, including diabetes. As a result of the increased risks related to obesity, childhood obesity is becoming a serious public health problem that has adverse and long-lasting consequences for individuals, families and communities.

Therefore, the funding of \$500,000 in the Administration's supplemental budget is for the Department of Health to do the following: (1) collect and analyze Hawaii specific early childhood data and identify children at risk; (2) increase awareness of early childhood obesity; (3) promote best program practices; and (4) ensure that the Department of Health's Task Force, includes identification of future legislation for the prevention of childhood obesity.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2778 SD1.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



LORETTA J. FUDDY, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII  
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In reply, please refer to:  
File:

## House Committee on Health

### S.B. 2778, S.D. 1 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH

Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.  
Director of Health

March 16, 2012

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health strongly supports this Governor's administrative  
2 measure.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** An unspecified appropriation under Section 2 of this measure for fiscal year 2012-  
4 2013 to collect and analyze Hawaii-specific early childhood overweight and obesity data, increase  
5 awareness of the health implications of early childhood obesity, promote best practices through  
6 community based initiatives, and establish a task force to develop and recommend legislation related to  
7 the prevention of childhood obesity.

8 **Purpose and Justification:** Recent research shows that the "tipping point" in obesity often occurs  
9 before two years of age. Nationally, approximately one in five children is overweight or obese by their  
10 sixth birthday. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) reports that "almost 10 percent of infants and toddlers  
11 carry excess weight for their length, and slightly more than 20 percent of children between the ages of  
12 two and five are already overweight or obese. The IOM report further recommends that because early  
13 obesity can track to adulthood, efforts to prevent obesity should begin long before a child enters school.

1           In Hawaii, the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program served approximately 43 percent of  
2   children under 5 years of age in 2009. Of these children served by WIC, over one in five of the 2-4 year  
3   olds were at risk of being overweight. For those entering kindergarten in 2002, over one in four or  
4   28.5% were at risk for being overweight or obese. Childhood obesity is a serious public health problem  
5   requiring urgent attention with prevalence in Hawaii going in the wrong direction each year. Young  
6   children ages 0-8 are dependent on responsible adults to provide healthy and nutritious meals and to  
7   instill regular physical activity and healthy eating behaviors. More emphasis on starting early to develop  
8   healthy food and physical activity habits in children will lead to better health outcomes. The  
9   Department recognizes the importance of preventing early childhood obesity and diabetes and the need  
10   to work with parents, the medical and early childhood community to address this issue together. The  
11   Department will use the funds to collect and analyze Hawaii-specific early childhood overweight and  
12   obesity data to identify children at risk. We will also work with partners to increase the awareness of the  
13   health implications of early childhood obesity and implement initiatives to prevent early childhood  
14   obesity such as promotion of breastfeeding and enhancing of the role of child care settings in obesity  
15   prevention. The Department will use existing Healthy Hawaii Initiative resources to establish and staff a  
16   task force to develop and recommend legislation related to the prevention of childhood obesity.

17           The Department would like to request that in Section 2, line 19 that the attorney general member  
18   be deleted as it is already listed as a member on line 14.

19           Investing in our youngest children now will reduce the human and financial cost down the road  
20   of heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes – Hawaii's leading causes of death.  
21   Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**SB 2778 SD 1**  
**Making Appropriations for Early Childhood Health**  
**House Committee on Health**

March 16, 2012

9:30 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB 2778 SD 1**, which would create a Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force to develop and recommend legislation to prevent childhood obesity. Funds would be appropriated to collect and analyze Hawaii-specific early childhood data to identify children at risk; increase awareness of the health implications of early childhood obesity; promote best practices through community-based initiatives; and establish a task force to develop and recommend legislation to prevent childhood obesity.

OHA's strategic priorities include Maui Ola (Health), which represents OHA's commitment to ensure the improvement of Native Hawaiians' quality of life and reduction in onset of chronic diseases. Obesity is a common condition of chronic diseases, and data suggests that Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are at greater risk for obesity and obesity-attributable health complications. As such, OHA's Health Advocacy Initiative Core & Advisory Team is focusing its efforts on decreasing Native Hawaiian obesity rates in relation to Hawai'i's general population.

We particularly support a public health approach that aims to arrest childhood obesity, and we encourage the inclusion of the Native Hawaiian as well as the Pacific Islander voices in vetting recommendations from the Task Force, as there is a strong indication that Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islander children are represented in the top of variation of rates for children ages 10-17 years who are overweight or obese. (2007-National Survey of Children's Health: National Maternal Child Health Bureau and CDC & Prevention.)

In addition, state agencies who consistently disaggregate data will find developing, planning and recommending policy very helpful in achieving the intent of this bill and help OHA and others to achieve their strategic priorities, including, but not limited to, seeking to ensure that Native Hawaiian chronic disease rates will be equal to or less than those of the general population of Hawai'i.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to PASS SB 2778 SD 1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



**Hawaii House Committee on Health**  
**Subject: S.B. 2778 SD1**  
**Making an Appropriation for Early Childhood Health**

**March 16, 2012**

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of the Committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to support the intent of S.B. 2778 SD1.

I am David Thorp, director of government affairs for the American Beverage Association (ABA) in Washington, D.C. The American Beverage Association is the national trade association representing the non-alcoholic beverage industry. ABA represents hundreds of beverage producers, distributors, franchise companies and supporting businesses that employ more than 227,000 people across the country.

ABA members offer consumers myriad brands, flavors and packaging choices and a full range of drink options including soft drinks, diet soft drinks, ready-to-drink teas, bottled waters, water beverages, 100 percent juice, juice drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks.

**Beverage Industry's Impact on Hawaii's Economy**

The beverage industry is an important part of Hawaii's economy – and one of the few remaining industries still manufacturing on the Islands. Unlike most consumer products, many beverages are manufactured and distributed right here in Hawaii – by local workers.

Non-alcoholic beverage companies in Hawaii provide more than 1,000 good-paying jobs across the state and help to support many thousands more workers in restaurants, grocery stores and more that depend, in part, on beverage sales for their livelihood.

**The Beverage Industry Supports a Comprehensive Review of the Obesity Problem**

Obesity is a complex problem with no simple solution. Many factors contribute to obesity and related health problems. Making smart, educated decisions about diet and exercise make people healthier, not simplistic or symbolic solutions. If we want to get serious about obesity, we need to encourage a balanced diet with sensible consumption of all foods and beverages and promote more physical activity and exercise for all citizens.

The obesity crisis is a complex, national challenge that requires all of us to re-examine old practices and find new solutions. All of us – policymakers, parents, educators, industries and community leaders – have a responsibility to do our part to help teach our children and all citizens how to have a healthy lifestyle.

However, singling out one particular product to lay disproportionate blame for the obesity problem is too simplistic and will not have a significant impact on a problem as complex as obesity.

## **The Beverage Industry Has Taken Bold Action to Do Its Part to Address Obesity**

To effectively confront the multi-faceted obesity issue, it will require all of us to work together in our respective roles as leaders of industry, government and the health community. The beverage industry supports education and other solutions that work, like our national School Beverage Guidelines and new calorie labeling initiative, *Clear on Calories*.

- Cutting calories available from beverages in schools by 88 percent. Our companies removed full-calorie soft drinks from schools across America, replacing them with lower-calorie beverage choices.
- Placing new labels clearly listing calories on the front of its beverages.
- Producing fewer total beverage calories for the marketplace through the innovation of more zero- and low-calorie beverages. From 1998-2008, industry cut the total beverage calories it brought to market by 21 percent.

### **School Beverage Guidelines:**

In 2006, the beverage industry teamed with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a joint initiative of the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association, to develop National School Beverage Guidelines. These guidelines, which have been fully implemented across America, remove full-calorie soft drinks from all schools and provide students with a broad range of lower-calorie, nutritious, smaller-portion beverage choices. There are now 88% fewer calories from all beverages in schools nationwide and a 95% reduction in full-calorie soft drinks (2004-2009).

### **Clear on Calories:**

The beverage industry has also come together for its *Clear on Calories* initiative in support of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" anti-obesity campaign.

This voluntary commitment makes the calories in our products even more clear and consumer-friendly by **putting calorie information at consumers' fingertips at every point of purchase, including containers, company-controlled vending machines and fountain machines**. Consumers will be able to make informed choices about the beverages that are best for themselves and their families at any given time.



### **Conclusion**

All of us – policymakers, parents, educators, industries and community leaders – have a responsibility to do our part to help teach our children and all citizens how to have a healthy lifestyle. The beverage industry is proud of its nutrition programs that have already had a proven and meaningful impact on the obesity problem.

The beverage industry supports the intent of S.B. 2778 SD1 and looks forward to helping all citizens understand the need for a comprehensive approach to have a healthy lifestyle by making smart, educated decisions about diet and exercise.

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SERVICE

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**Testimony on SB 2778 Making an Appropriation for  
Early Childhood Health, Hearing Date: Friday,  
March 16, 2012, State Capitol, Room 329, 9:30 a.m.**

Dear Chair Rep. Ryan Yamane and Vice-Chair Rep. Dee Morikawa and  
Committee members,

I am Howard S. Garval, President and Chief Executive Officer of Child  
& Family Service, Hawaii's oldest human services nonprofit organization  
whose mission is **strengthening families and fostering the healthy de-  
velopment of children.**

**I am writing in support of SB 2778 Making an Appropriation for Early  
Childhood Health**

Childhood and adult obesity have reached epidemic proportions in this  
country and in Hawaii. The human, social, health care/medical and fi-  
nancial costs are staggering! We need to do so much more to prevent this  
serious condition from developing in children. SB 2778 proposes several  
modest recommendations to address this epidemic. With a recovering  
but still weak economy here in Hawaii, the funds being proposed are rea-  
sonable, but as the economy improves, we need to do so much more. A  
stronger investment in prevention through education and increased  
awareness as well as promoting healthier diet and adequate physical ex-  
ercise will be needed to have an impact.

I applaud the authors of this legislation that takes an important step in  
elevating Hawaii's commitment to our keiki.

I urge your support of this legislation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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

*Our Mission: Strengthening Families and Fostering the Healthy Development of Children*