



NEWS RELEASE – HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HAWAII LAWMAKERS SELECTED FOR NATIONAL EARLY LEARNING FELLOWS PROGRAM

House and Senate Education Chairs Roy Takumi and Jill Tokuda Tapped to Participate in Program Sponsored by National Conference of State Legislatures

Honolulu, Hawaii – Representative Roy Takumi (Pearl City, Manana, Waipio) and Senator Jill Tokuda (Kāneʻohe, Kāneʻohe MCAB, Kailua, Heʻeia, Āhuimanu) are among legislators from across the country who will participate in a new Early Learning initiative by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

The endeavor is designed to support emerging legislative leaders on early childhood learning expand their knowledge in all areas related to pre-kindergarten education.

Takumi and Tokuda were instrumental in stewarding early education bills through the 2013 Legislative Session, and successfully implementing into law the foundation for phasing in early learning in Hawaii, an issue which had been endlessly discussed since the 1990's without concrete resolution.

"State Legislatures have been on the forefront of addressing the early educational needs of our children. The NCSL Early Learning Fellows Program will enable us to get more information on policy issues, training, assessment, accountability and governance of early learning to better make decisions on Hawaii's early education policies," said Representative Takumi.

Takumi also served as a co-chair at the National Conference of State Legislature's (NCSL) Foundation for State Legislatures Partnership on Educator Effectiveness. First elected to the State House of Representatives in 1992, Takumi served as Chair of the Higher Education Committee from 2001-2003 and as Chair of the Committee on Education from 2003 to the present.

"Early childhood education is one of the greatest equalizers we can give our children, ensuring every chance that they can have to be successful in both school and life," said Tokuda. "As we build Hawaii's early learning system, we hope to integrate models of best practice from across the country with what we know works best locally to meet the needs of our children and families. Collaborating and engaging with colleagues and experts in the field of early childhood through this program will allow us to do this."

Tokuda has served as the Senate's education chair since 2011 and served as higher education chair since 2009. Tokuda has served in the Hawaii State Senate since 2007.

The program will also allow the Hawaii lawmakers to meet, discuss and learn from fellow legislators working on the issue, and engage with research and policy experts who are leaders in the field of early childhood learning.

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