



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

February 24, 2023

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

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

**SUBJECT: Measure:** S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO INFANT & EARLY CHILDHOOD  
MENTAL HEALTH  
**Hearing Date:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023  
**Time:** 10:00 am  
**Location:** Conference Room 211

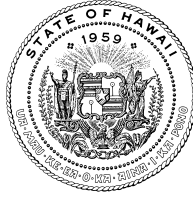
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support**

EOEL supports S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Health.

EOEL works with stakeholders to establish a system that ensures a solid foundation of early childhood development and learning for Hawaii's children from prenatal to age five. Supporting early mental health and development in the youngest years is critical. Mental health issues, even at this stage of the earliest years, can be caused by biological and/or development factors, experiences of trauma such as family violence, child abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse, and experiencing systems of poverty. These issues may result in developmental delays that could have long-lasting and detrimental impacts to children's health and development.

EOEL supports the Legislature's efforts to provide an infant and early childhood mental health program to implement strategies that aim to support and strengthen young children's growth, development, and learning by identifying, intervening, and preventing issues at some of the earliest stages of life. We also appreciate the Legislature's intent in the bill to support workforce training across the various early learning settings as workforce supports will be critical in implementing effective programming.

We look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders and departments to continue strengthening the systems of support for our youngest keiki across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Wednesday, February 28, 2023

10:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

**In Strong Support**

**S.B. No. 1351, SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health**

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

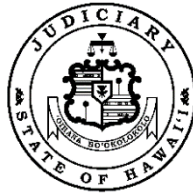
The Office of the Governor **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** S.B. No. 1351, SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adverse childhood experiences or ACEs can have lasting and lifelong negative effects on the health and well-being of our keiki. Increasing resources for early childhood intervention will create additional support for families and ensure that these families have access to mental health resources.

This bill would help to address this ongoing need by creating a new Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program within the Department of Health. This program would increase access to mental health services for children from birth to age five and work to develop and implement flexible strategies to better understand the needs of our infants and young children across the state.

Many children struggle with mental health challenges, and the pandemic only intensified and highlighted the ongoing challenges they are facing. We are at a critical juncture in increasing awareness of, and access to, mental health services to improve outcomes for Hawaii residents and build healthier communities. S.B. No. 1351, SD1 is a step in the right direction to achieving this goal.

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



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i*

**Testimony to the Thirty-Second State Legislature  
2023 Regular Session**

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

Tuesday, February 28, 2023.  
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

by:

Matthew J. Viola  
Senior Judge, Deputy Chief Judge  
Family Court of the First Circuit

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

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**Bill No. and Title:** Senate Bill No. 1351, S.D.1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

**Purpose:** Establishes the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program within the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five, develop and implement flexible strategies for the delivery of services and workforce training, and promote better understanding of the needs of infants and young children, the importance of positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-informed care. Appropriates funds for the establishment of the center, including one permanent full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position. (SD1)

**Judiciary's Position:**

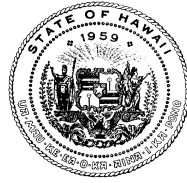
The Judiciary takes no position on Senate Bill No. 1351, S.D.1, but acknowledges the need for effective mental health programs, to include those for our youngest and most vulnerable members of our community.



Senate Bill No. 1351, S.D.1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.  
Page 2

Many believe that trauma endured by babies does not have a lasting effect. Through our Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 587A cases, especially our Zero To Three specialty court, we have learned that just is not true. The actions of adults towards our youngest keiki can have a lifelong impact on their mental health. Our community has had limited access to mental health programs for keiki from ages zero to five. Research shows that when keiki can commence an effective treatment earlier in their development, we observe better outcomes for their future. As a community we owe it to all keiki to be provided with the opportunity to have the best start to life possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1351 SD1  
RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.**

SEN. DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: February 28, 2023

Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** \$800,000 general fund appropriation.

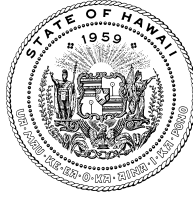
2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports SB1351 SD1, which is an  
3 Administration Legislative Proposal. The last officially published strategic plan from DOH  
4 prioritized the need to create and promote systems of care that support infant and early childhood  
5 health, in particular 0 – 5 age range, which is when 90% of a child's brain develops.

6 The Office of Wellness and Resilience, the Executive Office on Early Learning, the Lieutenant  
7 Governor's early childhood education focus, and many other public and private initiatives are  
8 critical stakeholders in this conversation. The department looks forward to continued discussion  
9 on this measure to assure that leadership and coordination is robust, and that agency expectations  
10 are clear.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

12 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

13



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**  
Tuesday, February 28, 2023  
10:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
**In Support of**  
**S.B. No. 1351 SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health**

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

The Office of the Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office is in **SUPPORT** of S.B. No. 1351 SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

Established through Act 291, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, OWR will address barriers and build wellness and resilience through trauma-informed, strengths-based strategies and support agencies in their efforts to address trauma-informed care and move toward a collaborative, shared purpose of collective system reform.

As negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to show up in our daily lives, awareness, and prevention of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) is a priority for our state. The OWR is dedicated to addressing the impacts of ACEs for keiki to kupuna, and this bill will increase resources for early childhood intervention and create additional support for keiki and their families through access to effective trauma-informed mental health resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

Mahalo,

Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA  
Executive Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience  
Office of the Governor



**Parents And  
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1351 SD1

**TO:** Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, & Members – Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO

**DATE:** February 28, 2023 at 10:00 AM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports SB 1351 SD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health**, which creates an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 need mental health supports. Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative and many partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of an IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will help to coordinate and address the social-emotional and mental health needs of our youngest children. There is a critical shortage of mental health services for children ages 0-5 and their families. Early childhood programs and services are struggling to fill staff vacancies for mental health.

PACT has participated in the Promising Minds initiative. The collaboration has resulted in the usage of culturally appropriate and evidenced-based approaches to the benefit of our constituents. We are excited to see this work continue and grow through state investment.

Additionally, since 2022 Hawaii's IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable, equitable and accessible IECMH consultation system. By December 2023, this Coordinating Team will develop a plan the new IECMH program in DOH could implement.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.



Date: February 24, 2023

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

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Strong Support for SB 1351**, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

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Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. Over 300 ECAS network partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

**ECAS strongly supports passage of SB 1351.** SB 1351 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

Infant and early childhood mental health has been identified as a top priority by all ECAS teams. It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 need mental health supports. Since 2018, direct service providers, philanthropic organizations and representatives from Department of Health, Department of Human Services and the Executive Office on Early Learning have been working together to implement the [Integrated Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan](#), funded predominately by philanthropy, with close to \$5 million in investments.

**The budget request is imperative to establish state infrastructure and position Hawai'i for federal funding.** Investing in a full-time DOH position will fill a systems' gap, ensuring our youngest keiki get the mental health services they need. The full-time position will also help streamline statewide efforts and position Hawai'i to pull down existing federal funding that supports early childhood mental health. Funding for three consultants will help meet immediate unmet needs in home visiting, early intervention and child care and the remaining funds will be allocated to basic infrastructure like professional rosters to ensure quality, data collection and evaluation.

As Governor Green frequently says, "Hawaii's children deserve a trauma-free life." The creation of the IECMH program will focus on prevention, thereby saving millions in downstream mental health interventions and will enable Hawaii's keiki to have a brighter start.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support of SB 1351.**





## HAWAI'I COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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

**FROM:** Micah A. Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President

**DATE:** February 24, 2023

**RE:** Support for SB 1351 SD 1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **strongly supports** Senate Bill 1351 SD 1 (SB 1351 SD 1) relating to infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH). This bill would help to better coordinate mental health across the lifespan, inclusive of Hawai'i's 0- to 5-year-olds. Currently, no one agency or department is responsible for coordinating IECMH and as a result services are not adequate, nor part of a cohesive system of prevention and care. We commend Department of Health for stepping up to address this gap in service delivery and working proactively to develop a plan.

In 2019, HCF launched Promising Minds, a four-year initiative dedicated to improving early childhood behavioral health in Hawai'i by investing in the future of our keiki, especially those at-risk of trauma, abuse and neglect, or dealing with their aftereffects. Hawai'i Community Foundation and co-funders of Promising Minds have invested \$5 million in strengthening Hawai'i's mental health system so it includes infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports.

SB 1351 SD 1 would increase Hawai'i's eligibility for new federal funds for the program and continue to leverage public-private investments locally. The proposed budget in the bill is realistic for two years. Most importantly, there is a ready workforce available to provide IECMH services and more people in training who can provide services in future years.

Finally, SB 1351 SD 1 builds on work that is currently underway. Since 2022, HCF has participated alongside nine organizations and state agency divisions on the IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team. The public-private Coordinating Team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable and accessible IECMH consultation system and could assist or advise Department of Health on a blueprint for implementation.

If we provide an ounce of prevention in the early years, the social and health benefits can positively impact a lifetime. Mahalo for hearing this important bill and I urge the Committee to move SB 1351 SD 1 forward.



*Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.*

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

Re: SB1351 SD1, relating to infant and early childhood mental health  
10:00 a.m., Feb. 28, 2023

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 1351 SD1, relating to infant and early childhood mental health.**

Our brains develop most rapidly from birth to 5 years old, with the first three years being the most rapid of those. One of the most important components of successful development for our youngest keiki is that they have strong, nurturing relationships with adults in their lives—whether it be parents, caregivers or other providers. It's vital that we support children and those who care for them with a system that promotes healthy development and nurturing relationships.

The current system looks after infant and early childhood mental health through services given to each specific child. Thus, it can be difficult to take a system-level approach. A dedicated infant and early childhood mental health program in the Department of Health could help to support these existing efforts while expanding their impact by supporting parents, caregivers and other service providers in their ability to foster healthy and nurturing relationships while knowing when and where to get help for keiki.

We especially look forward to the potential this program can bring to **support and enhance existing programs and services for young children.** We believe an infant and early childhood mental health program should be an important complement to the various existing programs in the Family Health Services Division as well as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

**We urge you to advance this important measure.**

Mahalo,  
Ke'ōpū Reelitz  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



February 28, 2023

TO: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
And Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Kerrie Urosevich, Co-Chair  
Commit to Keiki

RE: S.B. 1351 SD1  
Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Commit to Keiki **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** Senate Bill (SB) 1351 SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Hawaii Community Foundation has partnered with several philanthropic organizations to invest approximately \$5 million in Promising Minds to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. While philanthropy's investment has identified and started to address a critical community need, the demand for services, especially post-COVID, is overwhelming and state participation is critical to both provide additional services and to access federal funding in this new, growing practice area.

Significant government-nongovernment efforts are underway to help build a sustainable and equitable statewide IECMH consultation system. Anchoring IECMH into the Department of Health will create much needed infrastructure to coordinate local efforts, get consultants into our community and to secure available federal funds to expand IECMH to needed communities.

As Governor Green frequently says, "Hawaii's children deserve a trauma-free life." The creation of the IECMH program now will build on and anchor the work already underway and enable Hawaii's keiki to have a brighter start.

Thank you for allowing Commit to Keiki to provide testimony on this important measure.

Commit to Keiki, a project of the Early Childhood Action Strategy, is a public-private collaborative to ensure that Hawai'i's youngest children (birth to 5 years old) and their families have a brighter start. Early Childhood Action Strategy is a project under Collaborative Support Services, Inc. Led by a diverse Steering Committee, with representatives from Hawai'i business, education, early intervention, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, Commit to Keiki serves as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to Hawai'i's youngest keiki and families.



HAWAII FAMILY SUPPORT INSTITUTE  
*Making Hawaii's Families Strong*

**Executive Director**

February 25, 2023

Gail F. Breakey

Senator Donovan Delacruz, Chair Ways and Means Committee

**Advisory Board**

Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaron, V-Chair, Ways and Means Committee.

Greg Auberry, Co-Chair  
Victoria Schneider,  
Co-Chair

Re: SB 1351, SD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Nicole Brodie

Dear Senators Delacruz, Keith-Agaron and Members of WAM,

Jessi L. Hall, Judge

Patti Lyons

Elizabeth MacFarlane

Robert Pantell, MD

Victoria Schneider, MD

Matthew Shim

Karen Tan

This testimony is in strong support of SB 1351, SD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

**Consultants**

Linda Cobl

The human brain is structured and literally “wired” during the three years of life, basically establishing the foundations for social-emotional development. This occurs with the interaction of the infant with its parents and other caregivers, and lays the ground-work for cognitive development. For many families, this goes well. However an increasing number of families are facing serious social and economic problems, which result in significant parental stress as well as lack of time to spend with their young children. This can seriously affect early child emotional development and stability.

The statewide Healthy Families screening program which was in place up until 2009, found that about 2,454 births annually involved some level of risk for social emotional development. Other current data suggests that 29,000 keiki under age 5 are in need of some mental health support.

The private sector, notably the Hawaii Community Foundation, has supported efforts to train personnel in competency based skills to work with the early childhood population. This bill would provide staff for the Department of Health to coordinate local efforts, to get well trained consultants into the community to work with pre-schools and other organizations serving young children, and to secure federal funds to expand services to children and their families. Services provided early in life will reduce the need for later mental health services to teens and adults.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gail Breakey'.

Gail Breakey, RN, MPH Director  
Hawaii Family Support Institute

**SB-1351-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 6:26:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cynthia Barley, Rainbow Schools	Testifying for Rainbow School, Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

FROM: Rainbow Schools

RE: SB 1351 SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Rainbow Schools strongly supports SB 1351 SD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 SD 1 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five. This bill is timely and important because:

1. there is a proactive plan by State of Hawaii Department of Health already to address the gap and provide IECMH services;
2. the budget in SB 1351 SD1 is realistic for the two-year timeline; and
3. the workforce exists to provide the service, and more are currently in training for future workforce needs

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative and many partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. All of this work is grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of a IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will help to coordinate and address needs that we see in the community. We are excited to see this work continue and grow through state investment.

I urge the Senate Committee on Ways and Means to move SB 1351 SD1 forward.

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

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO INFANT & EARLY  
CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH  
Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 28, 2023  
Time: 10:00 am  
Location: Conference Room 211 Measure:

EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION: Support the Intent of S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 1

ELB supports the intent of S.B. No.1351 S.D 1 and defers to the Department of Health.

The Early Learning Board (ELB) is composed of early learning and care stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. The Board governs the Executive Office on Early Learning and supports its efforts to ensure a solid foundation of healthy child development and learning for Hawaii's *keiki*, prenatal to age five. Critical to that work is ensuring that young children's mental health is supported and those impacted by early trauma (child abuse, poverty, family violence, child neglect) are cared for and offered the supports needed to develop into healthy individuals. Without such support, young children are likely to experience developmental delays that potentially will negatively impact their growth over time.

ELB supports the Legislature's efforts to provide an infant and early childhood mental health program to implement strategies that aim to support and strengthen young children's growth, development, and learning by identifying, intervening, and preventing issues at some of the earliest stages of life. We also appreciate the Legislature's intent in this bill to support workforce training across the various early learning settings as workforce supports will be critical in implementing effective programming.

Thank you for the opportunity to support the intent of S.B. No.1351 S.D.1



THE  
SAMUEL N.  
AND  
MARY CASTLE  
FOUNDATION

and the  
HENRY & DOROTHY CASTLE  
MEMORIAL FUND

February 27, 2023

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ALFRED L. CASTLE  
Executive Director and Treasurer

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz  
Chair, Senate Committee on  
Ways and Means  
Fax: 808-586-6091

**From:** Al Castle, Executive Director, S.N. & Mary Castle Foundation  
**Re:** SB 1351 SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Samuel N. & Mary Castle Foundation strongly supports SB 1351 SD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 SD1 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five. This bill is timely and important because:

- 1) there is a proactive plan by State of Hawaii Department of Health already to address the gap and provide IECMH services;
- 2) the budget in SB 1351 SD1 is realistic for the two-year timeline; and
- 3) the workforce exists to provide the service, and more are currently in training for future workforce needs.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative and many partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. All of this work is grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of a IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will help to coordinate and address needs that we see in the community. We are excited to see this work continue and grow through state investment.

I urge the Senate Committee on Ways and Means to move SB 1351 SD1 forward.

With best wishes,

Alfred L. Castle  
Executive Director





February 24, 2023

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
And Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
FROM: JoAnn Farnsworth, President, Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health  
RE: S.B. 1351 SD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health (AIMH HI) STRONGLY SUPPORTS Senate Bill (SB) 1351 SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in Hawaii to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five.

The Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health was founded in 2008 with the vision that *In Hawai'i the early years are celebrated and revered, first relationships are nurtured, and infant and early childhood mental health is everyone's kuleana.*

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Hawaii Community Foundation has partnered with several philanthropic organizations to invest approximately \$5 million in Promising Minds to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. While philanthropy's investment has identified and started to address a critical community need, the demand for services, especially post-COVID, is overwhelming and state participation is critical to both provide additional services and to access federal funding in this new, growing practice area.

We ask that Ways and Means support the budget requested as that will not only allow for IECMH consultation to be provided to those who serve our youngest children but build the critical infrastructure pieces of workforce development, a competency based posterion platform and support for the consultants. AIMH HI has participated alongside nine organizations and state agency divisions on the IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Team. The public-private Coordinating Team has been working on a two-year project to build a sustainable and accessible IECMH consultation system and could assist or advise Department of Health on a blueprint for implementation. Anchoring IECMH into the Department of Health will create much needed infrastructure to coordinate local efforts, get consultants into our community and to secure available federal funds to expand IECMH to needed communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this very important effort for our keiki.

Mahalo nui loa,

JoAnn Farnsworth  
President, Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health

Feb. 25, 2023

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

Subject: **Measure** – SB1351 SD1 RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH  
**Hearing Date** – Feb. 28, 2023  
**Time** - 10:00 AM  
**Location** - Room 211

**This testimony is in support of SB1351 SD1.**

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. I am with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Education (COE) and serve as the director of the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE<sup>3</sup>) Project.

Research has shown that childhood trauma is common. More than two thirds of children in the U.S. experience traumatic events or circumstances, such as abuse and neglect, death of loved one, and domestic or community violence by the time they turn 16 years old. Young children in particular are, disproportionately exposed to traumatic events and circumstances. It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 in Hawai'i need social-emotional and mental health supports.

Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative and many partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system.

However, there is a critical shortage of mental health services for children ages 0-5 and their families and many sectors within the early childhood arena are struggling to fill staff vacancies for mental health.

I am in support of establishing the Infant and Early Children Mental Health (IECMH) Program within the Department of Health (DOH) to provide and coordinate mental health services for young children.

This program will develop and implement flexible strategies for the delivery of services and workforce training, and promote better understanding of the needs of infants and young children, the importance of positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-informed care.

Mahalo for opportunity to testify in support of SB1351 SD1.

**SB-1351-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 9:58:26 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erika Warner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

FROM: Erika Warner, LCSW, CSAC, IMH- E®

RE: SB 1351 SD1, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

I strongly supports SB 1351 SD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 SD 1 is Governor Green's bill to create an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program in the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children from birth to age five. This bill is timely and important because:

1. there is a proactive plan by State of Hawaii Department of Health already to address the gap and provide IECMH services;
2. the budget in SB 1351 SD1 is realistic for the two-year timeline; and
3. the workforce exists to provide the service, and more are currently in training for future workforce needs

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under age 5 are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the Promising Minds initiative and many partner organizations and funders across the state have been working together to expand young children's mental health supports and make them a full part of an inclusive mental health system. All of this work is grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of a IECMH consultation program in the Department of Health will help to coordinate and address needs that we see in the community. We are excited to see this work continue and grow through state investment.

I have been working at the Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawaii (AIMH Hi) for nearly 3 years. In my work as a clinical specialist I am responsible for training and supporting multidisciplinary professionals in the Infant and Early Childhood Sector. There is a significant need for more funding, support and respect for the people who serve infants, young keiki and their families.

Passing this bill will change the language around children in our state and will be a long awaited step in the pono direction. **Keiki do have mental health.** It is shaped within the context of the relationship with their caregivers- parents and professionals. Creating a specific department to focus on our most important resource; our children, is the only ethical decision.

I strongly urge you to give the keiki and families what they deserve- a focused, and dedicated department to address Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

I urge the Senate Committee on Ways and Means to move SB 1351 SD1 forward.

Erika Warner, LCSW, CSAC, IMH- E

Infant Mental Health Clinical Mentor ®

**LATE**

**SB-1351-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 10:46:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amanda Luning	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of quality prevention and positive outcomes for all our keiki and the families of Hawai'i, I strongly believe this measure will begin the complex processes of coordinating services in this critical and interdisciplinary field.