



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

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

House Committee on Human Services

Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair

Representative Terez Amato, Vice-Chair

House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair

Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

by:

Matthew J. Viola

Senior Judge, Deputy Chief Judge

Family Court of the First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 1351 S.D.2, 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 up to 5 years of age, 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.

Judiciary's Position:

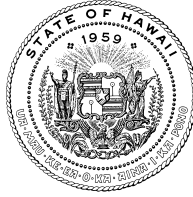
The Judiciary takes no position on Senate Bill No. 1351, S.D.2, but acknowledges the need for effective mental health programs, including those for the youngest and most vulnerable members of our community.



Senate Bill No. 1351, S.D.2, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
Committee on Human Services and Committee on Health & Homelessness
Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.
Page 2

Many believe that trauma endured by babies does not have a lasting effect. Through our Chapter 587A child abuse and neglect 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 commence effective treatment early in their development, they have better outcomes and brighter futures. As a community we owe our keiki the opportunity to have the best start in life possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committees on Human Services and Health and Homelessness

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

In Strong Support

S.B. No. 1351, SD2, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Aloha Chairs Mizuno and Belatti, Vice Chairs Amato and Takenouchi, and members of the House Committees on Human Services and Health and Homelessness:

The Office of the Governor **strongly supports** S.B. No. 1351, SD2, 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, SD2 is a step in the right direction to achieving this goal.

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



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

March 19, 2023

TO: Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health and Homelessness

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, March 21, 2023

Time: 9:00 am

Location: Conference Room 329

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

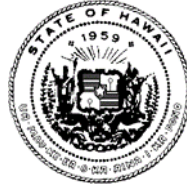
EOEL supports S.B. No. 1351 S.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Health.

EOEL works with stakeholders to establish a system that ensures a solid foundation of early childhood development and learning for Hawai'i'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.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 20, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [SB 1351 SD1](#)– RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.

Hearing: March 21, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this administration measure and defers to the Department of Health (DOH).

PURPOSE: This bill establishes the infant and early childhood mental health program within the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children up to 5 years of age, 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 [sic], including 1 permanent full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

The SD1 amended the measure by making technical amendments; the SD2 further amended the measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriations of \$800,000 and \$1,700,000, respectively, to unspecified amounts;

- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 2050, to facilitate further discussion on the measure; and
- (3) Making technical nonsubstantive amendments for purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's investment in early childhood, including supporting children's social and emotional development. Early intervention services, including infant and early childhood mental health services, can increase parenting and child development knowledge and strengthen a family's ability to observe and respond to their child's needs. DHS will continue to work with DOH and community stakeholders to deliver various services for children and families.

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



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

March 21, 2023

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Senate Bill 1351 SD2 – Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

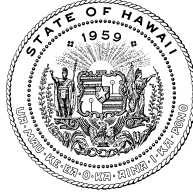
The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 1351 SD2 – Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. This bill would establish the infant and early childhood mental health program within the Department of Health to provide and coordinate mental health services for children up to 5 years of age, 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.

Early childhood experiences shape the brain, affecting lifelong health, behavior, and learning. Traumatic or abusive events in childhood are associated with depression, alcoholism, and drug abuse in adult life, as well as encounters with the justice/legal system, and risk-taking behaviors later in adolescence and adulthood. This bill would support the emotional and social needs of children and infants in the State, which is the launching pad for physical and cognitive development that prepares children for school and for eventual success in life.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committee on Human Services and Health & Homelessness

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

In Support of

S.B. No. 1351 SD2, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Aloha Chairs Belatti and Mizuno, Vice Chairs Takenouchi and Amato 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 SD2, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

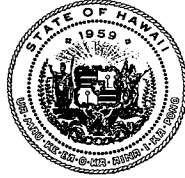
Established through Act 291, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, OWR will address barriers and build wellness and resilience through trauma-informed, strengths-based strategies and support agencies in their efforts to address trauma-informed care and move toward a collaborative, shared purpose of collective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



Reg Pilot Program

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 SD2
RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.**

REP. JOHN MIZUNO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

REP. DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date: March 21, 2023

Room Number: 329

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

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports SB1351 SD2, 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 DOH offers amendments that address two fundamental concerns:

- 7 1. Amend instances of “program” with “pilot project.” Since there is no base budget
8 corollary, future funding is not assured. The pilot project will be evaluated and a
9 recommendation to amend Hawaii Revised Statute to define a program may be made
10 thereafter. This measure's proposed amendments to chapter 321 are insufficient and ill-
11 defined to justify a budget proposal. This measure is best expressed as Session Law.
- 12 2. Coordination with other agencies to assure optimal communication, limit duplication of
13 effort, and prevent dilution of resources. Entities like the Executive Office on Early
14 Learning are statutorily mandated to address the 0 -3 years old age group and should have
15 a role in the conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation of the infant and early
16 childhood mental health pilot project.

1 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

2 **Offered Amendments:**

3 ~~["§321- Infant and early childhood mental health~~
4 ~~program; established. (a) There is established within~~
5 ~~the] The department of health, in coordination with the~~
6 ~~executive office on early learning and the office of~~
7 ~~wellness and resilience, shall implement [the] an infant~~
8 ~~and early childhood mental health [program,] pilot~~
9 ~~project, which shall provide and support mental health~~
10 ~~services for children up to five years of age, to ensure~~
11 ~~that each child in the [program] pilot project is able to~~
12 ~~form close and secure adult and peer relationships;~~
13 ~~experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions;~~
14 ~~and explore the environment and learn, all in the context~~
15 ~~of family, community, and culture.~~

16 (b) The infant and early childhood mental health
17 ~~[program] pilot project~~ shall develop and implement
18 flexible strategies for the delivery of services and
19 workforce training in a variety of settings, including
20 early child care and learning, home visitation, and early
21 intervention, and promote better understanding of the
22 needs of infants and young children, the importance of
23 positive early relationships, and the benefits of trauma-
24 informed care."
25

SB-1351-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 8:38:18 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/21/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Tochiki	EPIC Ohana	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The mental health needs of young children provides an important opportunity to improve the long term outcomes for our youngest children, and improve the relationships between parents and very young children. Our parent partners in the Makua Allies program work with mothers who are pregnant or just gave birth and are experiencing substance use disorder. Working with the Association for Infant Mental Health we are able to attend to the needs of both generations. We strongly support the establishment of services that specifically address this population.



**Parents And
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1351 SD2

TO: Chair Mizuno, Vice-Chair Amato & Members – House Committee on Human Services
Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Takenouchi & Members – House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO

DATE: March 21, 2023 at 9:00 AM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports SB 1351 SD2 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, 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.

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



Date: March 15th, 2023

To: Committee on Human Services
Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Committee Members

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Strong Support for SB1351 SD2**, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

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 SB1351 SD2. SB 1351 SD2 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](#). Coordination of the Plan has been funded by philanthropy and the Department of Health.

Philanthropy, in partnership with state partners, has laid the groundwork for the IECMH system. **The budget request is imperative to establish required 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. We have all seen the recent statistics in youth mental health. Young people are increasingly harming themselves, taking their own lives, harming others through gun and other related violence, dropping out of school and even becoming homeless. Mental health crises are preventable and we can make a significant impact by ensuring our youngest keiki and their families are happy and healthy. Please enable Hawaii's keiki to have a brighter start by supporting this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support of SB1351 SD2.**



1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1506 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
<https://familyhuihawaii.org>

March 15, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai`i State Legislature,

On behalf of Family Hui Hawai`i, I would like to provide our support for Senate Bill 1351 SD2 establishing the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Program within the Department of Health (DOH) to provide and coordinate a mental health service continuum for children age 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,

Additionally, we recommend that the IECMH program require strategies to expand the knowledge and training around IECMH to families as well as the workforce. When families are equipped with knowledge and support to embrace their role as their child's first and most enduring teachers, they can advocate for their children best and therefore partner with the workforce to provide the best and ideal support for children's mental and physical health. Policymakers must consider and support the needs of children's families around health and early learning. In professional circles where we work with families every day, we may inadvertently overlook the voice of constituents whom we serve. It is our responsibility to equip families with the supports to be a partner in the early learning health and wellness system as well as a client of the services that the system provides.

Family Hui Hawai`i is dedicated to strengthening families and communities, reducing violence against children, and promoting the healthy development of children, socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively, through peer to peer connection, parenting education and links to community services. Family Hui Hawai`i is a first contact provider to families with young children, prenatal-5 years serving over 1000 parents and children statewide each year. We see the struggles that families face every day and the difficulty they have in accessing supports and services. The investment in the families of our youngest children is a needed and economically strategic use of funds. During these early years, learning and wellness is about the whole child, physically, cognitively, and social-emotionally. Additionally, as an organization that employs staff and utilizes volunteers who empathize with the situations and families that they work with as peers, reflective supervision and reflective supervision consultation are critical supports needed to ensure that we are resilient and can provide effective and high quality support to our families.

Family Hui Hawai`i also recommends that the IECMH program builds upon the work that is already underway through the Promising Minds initiatives supported by the Hawaii Community Foundation and the work of IECMH Consultation Technical Assistance Coordinating Council in Hawaii.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health crisis across all age groups in America. Trauma-informed services for our youngest keiki are especially important during the most critical years of brain development and growth. Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences during the early years show a direct correlation to poor life outcomes including depression, drug abuse, family violence, and early death. The prevalence of childhood and family trauma and stress in Hawai'i has reached crisis levels since the start of the pandemic. The State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services has seen a dramatic decline in infant and toddler social and emotional development. In June 2020, 1000 parents with children <18yo were surveyed nationally. Female, single parents and families with younger children had higher declines in mental health.

Research shows that 52% of children in families with financial hardship are facing emotional distress. The investment in the families of our youngest children is a needed and economically strategic use of funds. During these early years, learning and wellness is about the whole child, physically, cognitively, and social-emotionally. Early learning is not just in the classroom and does not begin at age 4 years at PreKindergarten. Learning is everywhere the child is – at home, at their auntie's house, family child care provider's home, early learning centers, and at home with their family. Families play a critical role in preparing their children to be successful in school and life. They are the constant in the many learning environments that their children will experience as they grow. It is important to have an easy access point for families to receive information about their child's whole growth and development.

Prevention strategies building family resilience, social and concrete supports, parenting and early childhood development knowledge are proven to alter the outcomes of early adversity, reducing overall family stress and increasing wellbeing. Funding towards a full-time position for the IECMH program would provide a critical step in building a strong system for supporting our children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB1053 and SB1351. I urge you to move these bills forward.

Respectfully,



Cherilyn Shiinoki

Executive Director



March 17, 2023

TO: Representative John Mizuno, Chair Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair and Members of the House Committee on Human Services

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Health and Homelessness

FROM: JoAnn Farnsworth, President of the Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health

RE: S.B. 1351 SD2
Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health (AIMHHI) STRONGLY SUPPORTS Senate Bill (SB) 1351 SD2, 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.

The initial benefit of passage of this bill will be to enable a badly needed infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) system to get up and running here in Hawaii. IECMHC is a prevention based and capacity-building intervention implemented within a collaborative relationship between a professional consultant with mental health expertise and one or more caregivers. Hawaii is ready to begin implementation of IECMHC with a cadre of trained and credentialed consultants and early childhood providers are ready to welcome them.

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.

Infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) is emerging as an evidence-based intervention for supporting young children's social/emotional development, addressing challenging behaviors and increase workforce retention. Workforce turnover and staff vacancies are at a critical level in our systems of care for young children.

Our keiki and those who serve them need this resource now. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.





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: Representative Mizuno, Chair
Representative Amaato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Representative Belatti, Chair
Representative Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Re: SB1351 SD2, relating to infant and early childhood mental health
9:00 a.m., Mar. 21, 2023

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the committees:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 1351 SD2, 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.

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 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



March 21, 2023

TO: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Human Services

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Health and Homelessness

FROM: Kerrie Urosevich, Co-Chair
Commit to Keiki

RE: S.B. 1351 SD2
Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Commit to Keiki **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** Senate Bill (SB) 1351 SD2, 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.



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

TO: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair; and
members of the House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair;
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and
members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness

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

DATE: March 19, 2023

RE: Support for SB 1351 SD 2, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **strongly supports** Senate Bill 1351 SD 2 (SB 1351 SD 2) 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. One of the pilot efforts has been supporting IECMH consultation on a small scale through "give back" hours to early childhood program. That pilot has a developmental evaluation to answer major evaluation questions, support continuous improvement and growth of the program. The effort needs to expand; it is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health supports.

SB 1351 SD 2 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 2 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 2 forward.

SB-1351-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 8:17:30 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/21/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Abellera	Family Support Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair

The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair, and members of the

House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair

The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair and members

on Health & Homelessness

From: Family Support Hawaii

RE: SB 1351 SD2, Relating to Infant Early Childhood Mental Health

Family Support Hawaii strongly supports SB 1351 SD2 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. SB 1351 SD 2 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 birth to age five. this bill is timely and important because:

1) there is a proactive plan by State of Hawaii Department already to address the gap and provide IECHM services.

2) the budget is SB 1351 SD2 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 (staff is currently becoming IMH endorsed).

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under the age are in need of mental health supports. Since 2018, the promising Minds Initiative (which Family Support Hawaii participated in) 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 time part of an inclusive mental health system. All of this work is grounded in trauma-informed practices. The creation of 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 House to move SP 1351 forward.



Date: March 20th, 2023

To: House Committee on Human Services
Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
and Committee Members

House Committee on Health and Homelessness
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
And Committee Members

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Strong Support for SB1351 SD2**, Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

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 SB1351 SD2. SB 1351 SD2 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](#). Coordination of the Plan has been funded by philanthropy and the Department of Health.

Philanthropy, in partnership with state partners, has laid the groundwork for the IECMH system. **The budget request is imperative to establish required 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. We have all seen the recent statistics in youth mental health. Young people are increasingly harming themselves, taking their own lives, harming others through gun and other related violence, dropping out of school and even becoming homeless. Mental health crises are preventable and we can make a significant impact by ensuring our youngest keiki and their families are happy and healthy. Please enable Hawaii's keiki to have a brighter start by supporting this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support of SB1351 SD2.**

SB-1351-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:27:47 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/21/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nash Witten	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair and Committee Members,

As a born and raised primary care Family Medicine physician practicing in Wai‘anae and Hale‘iwa, O‘ahu, I STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill,

Nash Witten, MD

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

SB1351, RELATING TO INFANTS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Date: Tuesday, March 21st, 2023
Time: 9:00 AM
Place: VIA Videoconference
Conference Room 329
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Re: In SUPPORT of SB1351_SD2

Aloha Chair Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lezlee Cabaya and I am a graduate student at UH Manoa School of Social Work and Public Health. I am not representing the school or department, but I would like to provide my own statement. **I am testifying in favor of SB1351_SD2: Relating to Infants 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 wellbeing 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. 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.

It is estimated that 29,000 keiki under 5 are in need of mental health support. 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.

Passing this bill will allow children to develop socially and learn new skills, healthy coping mechanisms, decision-making skills, and greater insight and self-awareness. Implementing a dedicated infant and early childhood mental health program in the DOH 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 children.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of SB1351_SD2.**

Lezlee Cabaya

SB-1351-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 12:41:51 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/21/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Yamamoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee members,

There are two words in the bill that raise a huge red flag. "Home visits". I know of two states who have tried but failed to pass mandatory home visits to parents of first newborns. Home visits require consent or a court order to comply with privacy rights in the 4th Amendment search and seizure protections.

The Hawaii YWCA Healthy Start program that was defunded had a very effective program to invite Moms in the maternity ward to voluntary home visits with the option to cancel at any time. I recommend refunding that program.

I OPPOSE this bill as long as mandatory home visits are included because it violates constitutional rights.

Marilyn Yamamoto

Mar. 18, 2023

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Representative Della Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health and Homelessness

Subject: **Measure** – SB1351 SD2 RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY
CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH
Hearing Date – Mar. 21, 2023
Time - 9:00 AM
Location - Room 329

This testimony is in support of SB1351 SD2.

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 (ECE³) 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 SD2.

March 21, 2023

TO: REPRESENTATIVE JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

**SUBJECT: SB1351 S.D.2 – RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD
MENTAL HEALTH**

HEARING: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:00 AM
CR 329 Via Videoconference

Aloha Chairs Mizuno and Belatti, Vice Chairs Amato and Takenouchi, Members of the House Committee on Human Services, and Members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness.

My name is Caitlen Tacadena. I am a student at the Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 1351 S.D.2. This bill will establish the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program While providing and coordinating mental health services to children aged 5. The program will increase understanding of the unique needs each child has, but will also instill the importance of early positive relationships a child needs to enhance their well-being as they grow older.

When children experience chronic, stressful traumatic events, or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such disruption can negatively affect the child's neurodevelopment. According to the Child & Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, children who experience ACEs are at higher risk of developing chronic physical illnesses, mental, emotional, and behavioral health issues, and lowered quality of life and life expectancy. The aftereffects of the COVID-19 Pandemic itself has left children even more vulnerable to such a future, which means we need to act now and SB1351 is one of the many steps that can make a *positive impact* on these children's lives.

As an individual who engages with young children for work, I understand how important it is for children to develop and have healthy relationships with their peers, their families, and other supporting adults in their life. As a child who had experienced many hardships growing up, the support I received from those around me played a significant part in helping to shape the person I am today. my life that has. As a future social worker who hopes to serve the children of Hawai'i one day, I wholeheartedly believe that SB1351 is a step forward in ensuring that *all children will live a quality life and be their happiest and healthiest.*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Respectfully,

Caitlen P. Tacadena

SB-1351-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 8:31:42 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/21/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisabeth Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I enthusiastically support this Bill and appreciate the State of Hawaii interest in the mental health of our Keiki.

Proposed Testimony of Taylor Santos-Balisacan

In support of the following bill: SB1351 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Before the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

Tuesday, March 21, 2023 | 9:00am

Via Video Conference

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and Esteemed Members of the Committee:

My name is Taylor Santos-Balisacan, and I have experience working with Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii, working as an education assistant(EA) in 6th grade, working full-time as a preschool teacher, and I am currently a graduate student focusing on behavioral mental health at the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health. **I am testifying in support of Bill SB1351.** I do not represent any organization, but my background is relevant to know in supporting my statements in this testimony.

It's safe to say that it is common knowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic affected the mental health of all people. In the field of being service providers, we highly encourage any means of mental health support, and sadly this does not translate into those who do not work in this field. Stigmatization of mental health needs are still prevalent, however, due to the pandemic it increased social acceptance to openly talk about it.

I have worked with children as young as 2 years old, all the way up to mentoring college level students. In my own experience, the only times I've observed students being provided with mental health services are when their teachers deem they need disciplinary/corrective action, or when they have a diagnosed mental illness/disability. In 2022, Hawaii's DOH stated:

"2020 data estimates that 11,000 of Hawai'i's youth experienced at least one major depressive episode in the prior year. Of those who experienced a major depressive episode, approximately 6,000 did not receive mental health services in the prior year."

Children are our future, and our children need to be able to reach all of their developmental milestones, but that won't be possible if they can't mentally and emotionally thrive.

I support Bill SB1351. We owe it to our future and our keiki to right the wrongs that we have caused by not addressing our own mental health needs. Let's not allow another major environmental catastrophe to be the reason we finally take action.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify | Taylor Santos-Balisacan

Hawaii State Legislature

March 19, 2023

**The Honorable John Mizuno, Chair
The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair
and Members Committee on Human Services**

S.B. NO. 1351, SD2 RELATING TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

9:00 AM Via Videoconference

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Desiree Ancheta, a student with Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. **I am respectfully submitting the following testimony in strong support of S.B NO. 1351, SD2 Relating to infant and early childhood mental health.**

- Children's mental health problems can have serious consequences for early learning, social competence, and elevating the risk of physical and mental problems in adulthood
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 6 children ages 3–8 has a mental, emotional, behavioral, or developmental disorder
 - Only about 20% of children who need services receive appropriate help from mental health professionals

Early childhood mental health is often overlooked but the keiki of Hawaii have to start being a priority because they are our future. Therefore, I am in support of S.B NO. 1351, SD2 Relating to infant and early childhood mental health.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify,

Desiree Ancheta
MSW Candidate
School of Social Work and Public Health
University of Hawaii at Manoa

SB-1351-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 10:46:34 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/21/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kainani Derrickson, MSW	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly supports SB 1351 SD1 Relating to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. Our state is in need of systems, services, and supported to address Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

Kainani Derrickson, MSW

Why is this bill important to me?

I have lived in Hawaii for 31 years as an immigrant, and during this time I have served the community in various roles, including supporting Child and Family Services as a Home Visitor, Voluntary Case Manager, teaching in Preschools, and assessing the knowledge, skills and abilities of teachers and developing training curricula. Additionally, I have volunteered to provide mentoring to men and women in prisons. In each of these roles, I have seen how important helping children learn to process and control their emotions from very early childhood. Children that do not develop these skills early end up having significant impulse control and other emotional problems later in life, that negatively affects all aspects of their lives. As a training and curriculum specialist, I have also consistently seen a gap in teachers' knowledge and support in helping children develop socially and emotionally. I also saw this same gap existing in my other positions such as resource caregivers and social workers. This bill will provide these teachers much needed tools, training, and other support needed to bolster their ability to support healthy social emotional development in children from the very beginning and will help set up these children to grow into emotionally mature adults successful in the business and personal relationships.

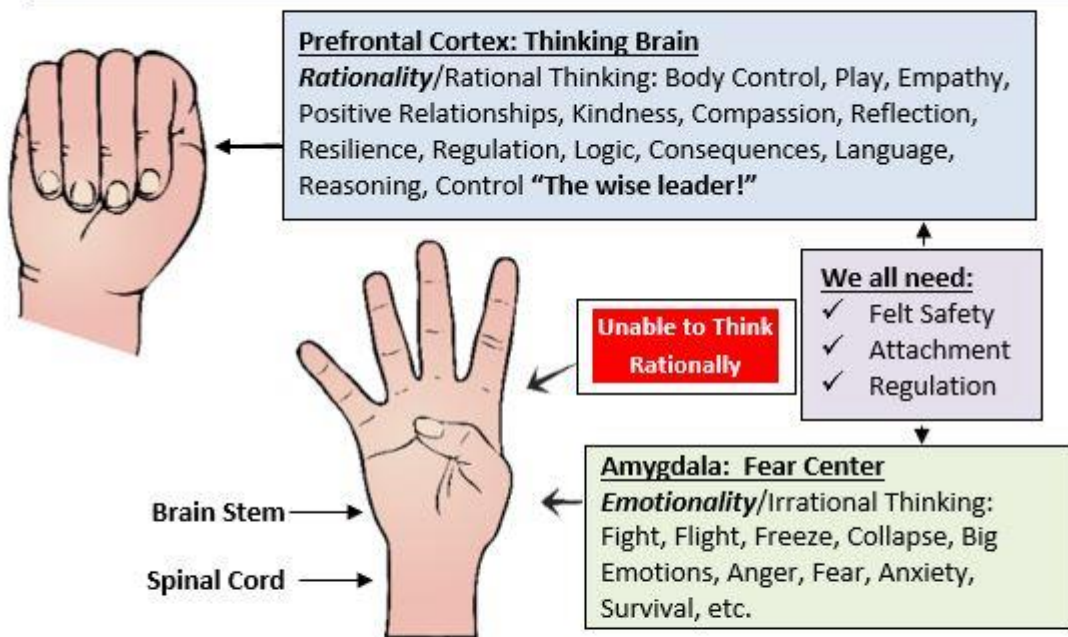
Why would it make a difference?

In my 31 years of experience, I see the State spending significant time and resources trying to address anger and other emotional issues in adults and adolescents. There has been much more focus on recovery rather than prevention. And yet when social-emotional development is not properly supported from the very earliest ages, children do not properly develop the ability to self-soothe and regulate their emotions. It becomes significantly harder to develop these skills the older the children become. In cases where there is also childhood trauma that is not properly healed, children's development stalls, and they will tend to remain emotionally stunted at the emotional age they were when the trauma occurred. Without these crucial skills developed early, later in life these children will tend to find it hard to hold jobs or build healthy relationships, and often end up turning to drugs to self-medicate, and end up in prison as a result. And in cases of childhood abuse or neglect, these children often end up abusing or neglecting their own children, perpetuating this destructive cycle. Providing funding to develop training and support programs specifically focused on social-emotional development, along with a knowledgeable support staff to develop and administer these programs, educators and other service providers will finally have the support they need to understand social-emotional development, identify children with developmental issues, and get those children effective support.

Summary

I would like to leave you with this visual image from Dr. Daniel Siegel, where he uses a closed fist to represent the brain. When the fist is closed, the fingers represent the frontal lobes that regulate behavior, and the wrist represents the brain stem. When a child has not learned self-regulation at a young age, when under stress, the brain stem and lower brain functions take over, and the frontal lobe is overruled. This is imagined by opening the fingers, showing the brain "exploding" when strong emotions take over and people stop being able to reason properly. All of these patterns are developed early in brain development. The earlier we can provide assistance to children to help them develop the ability to regulate their emotions properly, the better control they will have for the rest of their lives, and the better they will be able to support their workplace, families, and their own children in the future.

Dan Siegel's Hand Brain Model



Credit: Daniel Siegel, M.D., is the creator of this metaphor and neologism "Fist and Hand". Copyright © 2014 www.danielisrael.com

The Amygdala sends waves to the Hypothalamus (command center) which activates the Autonomic Nervous System:

- ✓ Sympathetic (fight, flight, freeze, collapse)
- ✓ Parasympathetic (rest & digest)

SB-1351-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 6:02:12 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/21/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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 Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i (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 ®

SB-1351-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 8:20:03 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/21/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eri Rodrigues	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of this measure to further promote recognition, enhance access and improve quality of infant and early childhood mental health services in our communities here in Hawai‘i.