

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: HB 1964, HD 2, SD 1 – RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2024
Time: 10:15 AM
Place: Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Early Learning Board Position: Support

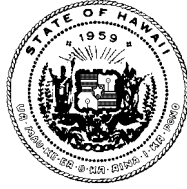
The Early Learning Board (ELB) is the governing board for the Executive Office on Early Learning. The Board supports HB 1964, HD 2, SD 1 recognizing the critical need to recruit and retain early childhood professionals who fulfill an essential infrastructure role in our communities Statewide.

The early childhood and early education professional workforce situation have been well-documented nationally, reflecting both their high demand and limited capacity. This same trend exists in Hawaii which was confirmed by the RAND Study completed in cooperation with the University of Hawaii Manoa in 2022. Low pay is consistently cited as a key barrier to entry into the field. Added to this challenge is the fact that many educational professionals left the sector during the pandemic and have not returned. The result has been that a number of early childhood settings are operating at reduced capacity, and some have closed due to staffing shortages.

A significant vehicle for addressing the current situation is to improve compensation and, thereby, seek to recognize the value of these currently underappreciated professionals. HB 1964, HD 2, SD 1 is a step toward doing so as it provides for a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers and group child care homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB 1964 HD 2, SD 1. The ELB appreciates the on-going support of the Legislature to support the workforce of this critical area of our community infrastructure.

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

TRISTA SPEER
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

April 2, 2024

To: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1964 HD2 SD1 – RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE.**

Hearing: Thursday, April 4, 2024, 10:15 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and provides comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation in this measure not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and group child care homes and bonuses to registered family child care homes. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Makes an appropriation. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Takes effect 7/1/3000. (SD1)

The House Committee on Human Services (HD1) amended the measure by:

- (1) Including licensed group child care homes as one of the licensed child care providers eligible to participate in the Child Care Provider Subsidy and Bonus Program;
- (2) Amending the types of proof each applicant must provide to the Department of Human Services regarding each covered child care worker or family child care home;

- (3) Clarifying that applicants and covered child care workers are prohibited from using state funds for any other unauthorized uses prohibited by law or as determined by the Department of Human Services;
- (4) Specifying that the University of Hawaii and any entity of the University are ineligible to receive subsidies or bonuses under the Child Care Provider Subsidy and Bonus Program;
- (5) Authorizing the Department of Human Services or its designee to review applicants for subsidies and bonuses;
- (6) Changing the means of financing for the Child Care Provider Subsidy and Bonus Program from a general fund appropriation to an appropriation into and out of the Child Care Grant Program Special Fund;
- (7) Inserting an unspecified appropriation from general revenues for one full-time equivalent Program Specialist position to carry out the implementation and monitoring of the Child Care Provider Subsidy and Bonus Program;
- (8) Changing the effective date to July 1, 2000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (9) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The House Committee on Finance (HD2) amended the measure by:

- (1) Changing the minimum hourly subsidy rate for child care workers to an unspecified amount;
- (2) Changing the minimum annual bonus for family child care homes to an unspecified amount; and
- (3) Changing the number of full-time equivalent positions established by this measure to an unspecified number.

The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services (SD1) amended the measure by deleting language that would have authorized a child care provider exempt from licensing and registration approved by the Department of Human Services to qualify for the child care provider subsidy and bonus program.

The Department estimates that to increase wages by \$2 an hour for four thousand three hundred (4,300) workers in licensed infant and toddler centers, group child care centers, and group child care homes, plus \$6,000 each for two hundred forty-seven (247) registered family child care homes, the subsidy and bonus program budget would need to be nearly \$19,300,000. Notably, DHS may not use federal child care block grant funds for provider grants, so the appropriation would need to be 100% state general funds or non-federal funds. Additionally, the Department will require an appropriation of \$100,000 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)

April 2, 2024

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program specialist to carry out the implementation and monitoring of the child care provider subsidy and bonus program.

DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not replace or reduce budget priorities identified in the Executive Budget.

Lastly, if the measure passes, DHS requests an extended effective date of January 31, 2025, or later since DHS has begun its implementation of the supplemental grant program to providers and would need time to develop administrative rules, standards, policies, an application form, and procedures to administer the child care provider subsidy and bonus program.

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



HB1964 HD2 SD1
RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 4, 2024

10:15 a.m.

Conference Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB1964 HD2 SD1**, which requires the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care center, group child care centers, and group child care homes and bonuses to registered family child care homes, requires annual reports to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

OHA is in its fourth year of its 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. The development of this strategic plan included gathering community input via surveys and focus groups as well as mana‘o from internal staff. One of the most critical needs that our community repeated was ‘ohana’s ability to provide high-quality keiki and kūpuna care.

HB1964 HD2 SD1 will support the state’s ongoing efforts to expand early childhood care and education. One of the greatest barriers for early childhood care and education providers to expand and even remain open is their ability to find adequate staffing. The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment noted that between 2018 and 2020, Hawai‘i’s child care workforce declined by more than 20%. When the University of Hawai‘i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project looked into this workforce in their 2022 report, they found that early childhood care and education professionals made on average between \$13 and \$17 per hour, far below what is needed for a living wage. These low wages are impacting child care providers’ ability to stay open and expand. **This in turn impacts families’ abilities to secure quality early childhood care and education, which then can affect an ‘ohana’s economic stability.**

HB1964 HD2 SD1 will establish a program that has proven impacts in other states and here at in Hawai‘i. North Carolina saw increases in child care worker retention when they instituted their WAGE\$ program. Additionally, it is our understanding that preliminary reports from the Hawai‘i Department of Human Services showed increased retention for

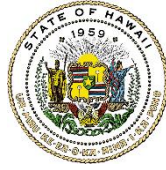


HB1964 HD2 SD1
RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

staff and providers who received bonuses from pandemic relief monies dedicated to child care.

OHA defers to the Department of Human Services on costs and implementation. We believe that addressing a vital component of early childhood care and education expansion—supporting the workforce—is a worthy investment that will have positive impacts on Native Hawaiian families. However, we recognize the constraints of our state budget given the costs borne from the Maui fires.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1964 HD2 SD1.
We urge the committee to pass this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

April 2, 2024

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: Measure: H.B. No. 1964 H.D. 2 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) supports H.B. No. 1964 H.D. 2 S.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding implementation.

Professionals stand as a cornerstone of high-quality early learning as we continue to increase access to these opportunities while building the infrastructure needed to ensure the State's investment reaps the intended returns.

Compensation is an effective way to enhance recruitment and retention of a qualified early learning workforce. Despite working in a specialized field with health, safety, and educational requirements and having higher levels of education than the average American worker (Whitebook et al., 1990), many early childhood care and education providers remain at the second or third percentile in the Bureau of Labor and Statistics rankings of occupation, making wages comparable to that of parking lot attendants, bartenders, and laundry service workers. Furthermore, 16 percent of child care workers are living in poverty, compared to the 10 percent of the general population in Hawai'i (Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2020).

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. EOEL strongly supports the inclusion of those who service our youngest keiki as those are the most likely to be furthest from fair wages.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature to support increasing access to quality early learning programs and services and the workforce in the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

**Hawaii
Legislative
Council
Members**

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country
Market
Hanalei

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko Family
Dentistry
Honolulu

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Maile Meyer
Na Mea Hawaii
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life
Natural Foods
Hilo

Kim Coco Iwamoto
Enlightened Energy
Honolulu

Chamber of
Sustainable
Commerce
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI
96823

LATE



Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

Thursday, April 4, 2024
10:15 AM in Conference Room 211

RE: **HB1964 HD2 SD1** Early Child Care Provider Subsidy - **Support**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Committee Members,

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents over 100 small businesses across the State that strive for a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity; we know Hawaii can strengthen its economy without hurting workers, consumers, communities or the environment.

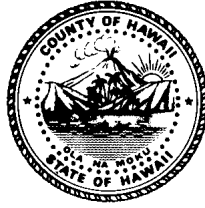
This is why we support HB1964 HD1, which requires the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care center, group child care centers, and group child care homes and bonuses to registered family child care homes.

Too many working families struggle to secure affordable, quality childcare; they are unable to return to the workforce and contribute to a vibrant economy. For some, the costs of childcare surpasses their own take home pay, especially when rush hour commuter traffic results in the need for 10 additional hours a week of childcare beyond the parents' own paid work times.

When employers look around and say, "Where did our workforce go; why can't we find anyone to work?" One response is that they are staying home to take care of their children, their grandchildren or their younger siblings. If a business cannot find sufficient numbers of workers to generate sufficient revenue to cover all the overhead costs of the business, then the business will have to close. The state will lose revenue from the general excise taxes and income taxes associated with those shuttered businesses.

Until the Legislature sufficiently funds the Department of Education so that it can expand its Early Childhood Education programs across the state, for children of all ages, then the legislature must provide alternative solutions to try to fix the childcare shortage and ensure the state's revenue streams are uninterrupted.

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: April 2, 2024
TO: Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB 1964 HD2 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am in support of HB 1964 HD2 SD1. HB 1964 requires the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a childcare provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and group child care homes. This bill is part of the Women's Legislative Caucus Package and is a crucial part of an overall vision to raise childcare provider salaries to help retain good staff members and ensure a stable workforce. This bill will provide funding to raise the hourly rate for our childcare providers. With my background in Early Childhood Education with an emphasis in Public Policy Development, this is an issue that is of special importance to me. Parents can't pay more and teachers can't live on their current wages; we must fund this better way forward or we will continue to waste our training dollars, have a revolving door of ECE teachers and see children's growth and development suffer. It is essential that our State delivers on the promise of quality education to all Hawai'i residents by properly funding childcare provider salaries.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenn Kagiwada'.

Jenn Kagiwada

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 12:09:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paula Yanagi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of Bill HB1964

Aloha Chair and committee members,

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy and bonus program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. A 2022 study completed by RAND Corporation in partnership with University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa showed that on average, child care workers earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour. Low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to early child care employment.

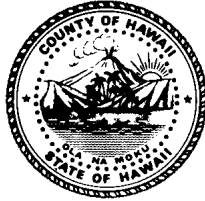
Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.

I have been a child care provider for 20 years! We are tired, under appreciated and in need of support and funding to continue to provide high quality care for children.

Please support this measure.

Thank you, Paula Yanagi

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor



Douglass S. Adams
Director

Frecia Cevallos
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
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April 2, 2024

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
10:15 AM, April 4, 2024
Conference Room 211
IN SUPPORT

RE: HB1964, HD2, SD1
Relating to Early Child Care

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB1964.

Quality early childhood education is a cornerstone of our economic infrastructure. Not only is child care necessary for parents to work, but more importantly, it is a critical time for the positive development of the young child in care. Having a stable cadre of teachers and caregivers is essential.

For years, child care providers have been subsidizing the tuition of families in their care through the acceptance of low wages. During the pandemic, child care providers were seen as essential employees – critical to our economy. And while that is true, their more important role is to provide a quality environment that supports positive brain development in young children. While affordable child care is imperative to families with young children, so is paying a living wage to those providing that care. It is an intricate balance and time we began to stabilize the field that nurtures, cares for and educates the youngest members of our society.

In the recent release of our state's Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA) scores, it was shown that only 29.6% of our kindergarteners are actually ready to start school. Additionally, only 50% of our third graders are reading at grade level. This data proves

May 1, 2023

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that we need to better support our youngest children in the early years by supporting their preparation for entering our education system.

Please pass this bill out of your committee and support its passage through the legislative process. Not only will it support our current providers in center based and family child care, but it will also help to recruit and attract more young professionals to the rewarding field of early childhood. The ultimate reward will be better outcomes for our youngest children.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Angela C Thomas, MA Ed
Early Childhood Specialist
Research and Development
County of Hawaii

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 1:12:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie S Kalakau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing this bill! Early Childhood educators work hard everyday for a pay that is inconsistent with the education, time and responsibility that is required of them! It is time to invest in those who are educating young children!

Julie

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 1:17:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca McGuire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

This bill is important to me as I work in the Early Childhood field in the position of hiring workers to work in a preschool setting. Finding workers willing to work with our youngest learners is hard with the fact that the amount that we charge is too high for working families yet too low to pay people to want to work. It is imperative that a system be in place to support finding qualified workers and thus opening more seats in our preschools.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Rebecca McGuire

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 1:18:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Fujimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

My name is Toni Fujimoto, and I am testifying in SUPPORT of HB 1964 HD 2 SD 1, which would establish and implement a childcare provider subsidy and a bonus program and help us retain our licensed infant and toddler childcare workforce. This bill is important to me because childcare providers need to make a living wage, which helps us retain the existing workforce and attract more childcare providers and without quality, affordable childcare, families are not able to go to work or pursue school, which impacts Hawai'i's economy.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 1:36:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shanda L Freitas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members,

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Please support the creation of a childcare worker subsidy and bonus program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. A 2022 study completed by RAND Corporation in partnership with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa showed that on average, childcare workers earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour. Low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to early childcare employment.

Preschools, childcare providers, and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.

I have been an Early Childcare Educator for 28 years. We need quality teachers who earn quality pay! I am in full support of HB1964, as should be the State of Hawaii. This would mean better teachers, better pay, better living, and a better economy for the people of Hawaii--especially for our Keiki! Please support this measure.

Mahalo,

Shanda Freitas M.Ed

Early Childhood Lecturer

UHWO

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 1:38:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassia Simms-Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Cassia Simms, and I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of HB 1964 HD 2 SD 1, which would establish and implement a childcare provider subsidy and a bonus program and help us retain our licensed infant and toddler childcare workforce. This bill is important to me because:

- I work with people who are interested in opening Family Child Care businesses. I can attest to the fact that there are people who are want to provide care to children, but who do decide not to do so because of the lack of pay they will get when they open.
- I personally would be working in an infant or toddler classroom if I could make a wage that would support myself and my two children, but have chosen to do other jobs that will pay my bills.
- We have people who are leaving our state because they are not able to find care for their children An example I know of is a lawyer who is currently in the process of moving to Utah because she is about to give birth and could not find care for her toddler and newborn.
- The people who take care of our children deserve to be treated as valuable and their pay should be reflective of that.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 2:00:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

This bill is important to me because I used to be a childcare worker and had to leave the profession I loved as it was not financially sustainable for me and my family. Childcare workers are extremely hardworking and do the irreplaceable and amazing work of caring for our children during their most impressionable and vulnerable time. Their high value should be reflected in the wages they receive.

Mahalo!

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 2:14:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gemma Medina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this measure to improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of early childhood classrooms. Families must have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten. This measure is the first step toward ensuring that early childhood care and education professionals earn a livable wage.

As a former preschool teacher/director of 20 years, I know first hand the struggle of trying to juggle multiple jobs just to live. Early childhood educators deserve to only have to have one job that they can pour their heart and souls into and be able to pay their bills! As a parent, I know that the cost of quality childcare is out of my reach even as an educated college instructor! We have to support measures that will pay teachers more or provide parents with more access to funding- the system is crumbling. As an ECE instructor, I have seen a decrease in the number of students who are willing to stay in the field...the pay is just too low.

Please support HB1964

Mahalo,

Gemma Medina

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 5:25:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mandie Gibson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

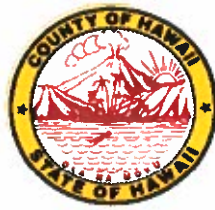
Comments:

Aloha and To Whom It May Concern,

I am in favor of this bill- early child care is the back bone of care for families who are working parents. Early Childcare help the workforce industry thrive. We must be able to retain the early childhood workforce so that our economy can continue. We also understand the need for quality, early programs for a great foundation for the keiki. Please push this bill through.

Thank You!

Mandie Gibson



Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor

Deanna S. Sako
Managing Director

Robert H. Command
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawaii
Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

April 3, 2024

Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hawai'i State Legislature
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Subject: **H.B. 1964, HD2, SD1 - RELATING TO EARLY CHILDCARE**
Hearing Date: Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 10:15 a.m.
Time/Place of Hearing: Via Videoconference, Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in strong support of **H.B.1964, HD2, SD1**. For many years childcare providers have been subsidizing the tuition of families in their care through the acceptance of low wages. Just as affordable childcare is an imperative for families with young children, so is paying a living wage to those providing that care. We are seeing the Lieutenant Governor address the availability and access of pre-school seats through the Ready Keiki initiative; this bill helps address the availability and stability of the provider workforce by requiring the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a childcare provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing childcare workforce in licensed infant and toddler childcare centers, group childcare centers, and group childcare homes, and bonuses to registered family childcare homes.

This is the right time to help our keiki, our families, our providers and our economy. Please send this bill to the Senate with a favorable recommendation. This will show our people that we support them and their families, and that we are working to create the quality of life that will enable them to stay home.

I **strongly support** the passage of **H.B.1964, HD2, SD1**. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor
County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE KAIĀULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD, SUITE 200 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817
PHONE: (808) 768-7762 • FAX: (808) 768-7792 • Website honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



ANTON C. KRUCKY
DIRECTOR
PO'O

AEDWARD LOS BANOS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

April 3, 2024

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki
and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

SUBJECT: Measure H.B. No. 1964 HD2 SD1 – Relating to Early Child Care

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. No. 1964 HD2 SD1

Affordable child care yields tremendous benefits to children, working families, businesses, and our communities at large, with some conservative estimates indicating every dollar invested in young keiki can save upward of seven dollars in the long-term. In addition, child care programs boost Hawai'i's economy by providing jobs and ensuring working families can sustain employment, generating \$300 million dollars in Hawai'i's Statewide revenue¹.

We know the demand for child care far exceeds the supply. We also know that our youngest keiki, our infants and toddlers, comprise one of our biggest gaps groups with families facing even more difficulty securing care.

We commend the State in prioritizing expansion of early learning opportunities, and to see those goals come to fruition we must invest in the child care and early learning workforce. **One thing we've learned in our conversations with many child care providers across O'ahu is the tremendous difficulty in finding adequate staffing, which impedes on the programs ability to expand or even sustain.**

¹ Child Care in State Economics, Committee for Economic Development, 2020 Update

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
April 3, 2024
Page 2

A study conducted by the RAND Corporation, commissioned by the University of Hawai'i in 2022, found that early childhood care and education professionals made an average between only \$13 and \$17 per hour, despite working in a specialized field with health, safety, and educational requirements. Child care programs operate on razor-thin margins with fixed costs that cannot be reduced and a high need for labor to ensure children's health and safety are protected. This means wages remain low and professionals leave.

Increasing compensation is an effective way to enhance recruitment and retention of a qualified child care workforce. These professionals are some of the most undervalued in our State and investing in them is an investment in our state's future. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Anton C. Krucky
Director



Parents And Children Together

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1964 HD2 SD1 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki & Members,
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: April 4, 2024 at 10:15 AM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1964 HD2 SD1, Relating to Early Child Care, which will establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to help retain the child care workforce in licensed programs.

Many child care workers struggle to make ends meet due to disproportionately low wages in a state with such a high cost of living. This disparity contributes to high turnover rates and loss of workforce which disrupts the continuity of care for children and incurs significant costs for child care providers and families. Lack of affordable and available child care has far reaching consequences, from the individual development of children to family economic stability (parents unable to return to work) to employer operations. When child care is not available, parents cannot work, triggering a cascade of problems for the family and for employers.

Child care workers are the backbone of our society, providing a nurturing and educational environment for our children during their formative years. They ensure the safety and well-being of our youngest citizens and facilitate their cognitive, emotional, and social development. Their impact lays the foundation for future success in school and life. Investing in higher wages for child care workers, will foster a more stable and sustainable child care system. A well-compensated workforce will attract and retain qualified professionals, ultimately enhancing the quality of care provided to Hawai'i's keiki.

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.

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

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 1:03:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Courtney Balkovek-Viernes	Testifying for Courtney's Day Care	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha State Legislature, I have been running my FCC day Care business for 15 years now. Due to the cost of living, economy, no benefits offered, and the fires on Maui expenses have risen on every level. For the first time in 15 years my business is struggling. Enrollment is down by 25% due to families not able to afford child care services. For the first time I'm thinking of closing down my business due to income decreasing. This bonus program would really help out. I will be used towards keeping my business open, home improvements on my child care area, and educational tools for my toddlers. This will be a big incentive for FCC's to stay open, encouragement for new FCC's to open, up grades on their work spaces, further education, and help with the increased economy with daily expenses. FCC's are in demand for families to go to work and keep their families afloat. If there is a decrease in FCC's closing or no further enrollments this will effect the economy on every level. In conclusion I'm in favor of bill 1964HB. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Courtney Balkovek-Viernes

Courtney's Day Care, Maui HI

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 1:27:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Padgett	Testifying for Maui County Early Childhood Resource Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill to support our early childhood workforce to earn a living wage and remain in their vitally needed positions. Every day I hear from parents who are struggling to find a child care spot for their child so that they themselves can work. There aren't enough preschools, infant/toddler centers or family child care providers to meet the need because of historically low wages. Something must be done to increase pay for child care providers to encourage people to enter the profession and retain existing workers.

Thank You,

Melanie Padgett



Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Support: HB1964 HD2 SD1

Thursday, April 4, 2024 10:15 a.m. Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) to express our strong support for HB1964 HD2 SD1. We believe that this bill is a crucial step towards ensuring the well-being of Hawai'i's children and families, as well as supporting the child care workforce in our state.

HB1964 HD2 SD1 proposes the establishment and implementation of a child care provider subsidy and bonus program by the Department of Human Services. This program aims to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and group child care homes, while also offering bonuses to registered family child care homes.

HAPA recognizes the critical importance of investing in our child care providers. They play a fundamental role in the early development and education of our keiki, and their dedication should be recognized and supported. By providing subsidies and bonuses, this bill acknowledges the value of their work and aims to address the challenges they face, including financial strain and workforce retention issues.

Furthermore, we commend the inclusion of a requirement for annual reports to the Legislature, which will ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of this program. It is essential to track the effectiveness of these initiatives and make any necessary adjustments to better support our child care providers and families.



Additionally, we would like to note our support for the Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) in their endorsement of this bill. Collaborative efforts between organizations like HAPA and HCAN underscore the broad support for HB1964 HD2 SD1 within our community.

In conclusion, HAPA urges the committee to pass HB1964 HD2 SD1 to establish the child care provider subsidy and bonus program. Investing in our child care workforce is an investment in the future of our children and our state. Thank you for considering our testimony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned above the typed name.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB 1964 HD 2 SD 1 – Relating to Early Child Care

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211, and Videoconference

Thursday, April 4, 2024, 10:15 AM

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of House Bill 1964 HD 2 SD 1 Relating to Early Child Care.**

The professionals who cultivate the nurturing environment where our youngest keiki can grow, learn, and thrive are at the heart of every early childhood care and education program. Families will tell you that when they make their choices about child care, one of the biggest priorities is the professionals doing the work of early care and education.

Too often, these critical professionals do not make a living wage. In 2020, a study found that 1 in 3 childcare workers faced food insecurity. A 2022 study completed by the University of Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that, on average, early childhood care and education professionals earned between \$13 and \$17 per hour. This is significantly below what's needed for a living wage.

Early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good that deserves public investment. They help children build critical skills they'll rely on their entire lives. A child's most rapid brain development happens between birth and three years old. This is when they develop vital skills that lay the foundation for lifelong education – social-emotional skills, math, motor skills, and literacy.

In addition to helping develop the next generations of curious and engaged citizens, infant and toddler childcare professionals enable parents, caregivers, and other family members to go to work. They are the workforce behind so many other workforces.

Even as critical as these professionals are, we are losing them in droves. According to the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, **Hawai'i lost 20% of its early childhood care and education workforce between 2018 and 2020.** Even more left the field during the pandemic. Nationally, more than 7% of the workforce has not returned. This means we have likely lost a quarter of the early childhood care and education workforce over the last five years.

We must retain dedicated professionals and attract the next generation of childcare workers and early childhood educators. These efforts must start with raising their wages. Below are cost projections for what will be needed to support our childcare providers.

This bill is a crucial step forward. HB 1964 HD 2 SD 1 requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish and implement a childcare provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing childcare workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers and bonuses to registered family child care homes.

As the state continues to expand early childhood care and education options for families, we must focus on expanding the workforce. **Please support HB 1964 HD 2 SD 1.**

Mahalo,

Chevelle Davis, MPH
Director of Early Childhood and Health Policy

Projections for Childcare Workers Wages

Mahalo for considering the proposal to increase childcare workers' wages. **HB1964 HD 2 SD 1** aims to address this need by establishing a childcare provider subsidy and bonus program. This initiative ensures access to safe and reliable childcare options for Hawai'i's families.

Currently, childcare workers' wages are supplemented with an additional \$12.8 million through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which will expire this year. With this supplement, childcare workers' wages were increased by \$1.43 per hour for an average yearly salary of **\$31,574.40 before taxes.**

ARPA Funds - Expires 2024	
Supplemental Wage Per Hour	\$1.43
Number of Active Caregivers	4300
Average Yearly Salary	\$31,574.40
Supplemental Grant Total	\$12,800,000.00

When the ARPA funds expire this year, some childcare workers will earn Hawai'i's minimum wage of \$14.00 per hour, which equates to a yearly salary of **\$29,120.00 before taxes,** and the average childcare worker earns \$15.18, which equates to an annual salary of **\$31,574.40 before taxes.**

Minimum Wage	
Minimum Wage Per Hour	\$14.00
Yearly Salary	\$29,120.00

Average HI Child Care Worker Wage	
Average Wage Per Hour	\$15.18
Average Yearly Salary	\$31,574.40

Cost projections have been generated for what we need to support our existing childcare workers, which is estimated to be around 4,300 registered with the Department of Human Services and 247 Family Child Care providers (home-based child care), and the cost of increasing wages by \$2.00, \$3.00, \$5.00, and \$8.00 per hour.

Meeting an \$8.00-an-hour wage increase for our childcare workforce would require an investment of \$71.56 million a year. This increase would raise the average childcare worker’s hourly wage to \$23.18 per hour for an average yearly salary of **\$48,214 before taxes**.

Current Caregiver Workforce			
Supplemental Wage Per Hour:	\$2.00	\$5.00	\$8.00
Number of Active Caregivers	4300	4300	4300
Grant Per Worker	\$4,160.00	\$10,400.00	\$16,640.00
Supplemental Wage Per Year for Family Child Care Providers:	\$6,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$24,000
Number of Family Child Care Providers	247	247	247
Supplemental Grant Total	\$19,370,000.00	\$48,425,000.00	\$77,480,000.00

We want to highlight that any wage increase below \$8.00 an hour will result in many childcare workers continuing to make below Hawai’i’s [self-sufficiency budget](#) (2022).

Supplement Per Hour	Caregiver Hourly Wage if Salary is Minimum Wage	Annual Income with Supplement	Poverty Level (with Supplement)	Self-Sufficiency Budget (2022) (One Adult - \$41,245)
\$2.00	\$16.00	\$33,280.00	192%	81%
\$3.00	\$17.00	\$35,360.00	204%	86%
\$5.00	\$19.00	\$39,520.00	228%	96%
\$8.00	\$22.00	\$45,760.00	264%	111%

The proposed legislation will support licensed infant and toddler childcare centers, group childcare centers, and registered family childcare homes through subsidies and bonuses. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen the childcare workforce decrease, with one of the reasons being unable to afford living in Hawai’i on such a low salary. According to the 2022 Research and Development (RAND) study on [Early Childhood Educators in Hawai’i](#), wages and salaries for early educators in Hawai’i are not competitive with jobs requiring similar levels of education or experience; median hourly wages, estimated at approximately \$13-\$17 per hour, are well below the living wage estimate of at least \$28.50 per hour for the state. By enhancing wages, we aim to attract and retain a skilled and dedicated childcare workforce, thus meeting the growing demand for childcare services.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to Hawai’i’s keiki.



April 4, 2024

Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz

Vice Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino

Sen. Lynn DeCoite

Sen. Troy N. Hashimoto

Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye

Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha

Sen. Michelle N. Kidani

Sen. Donna Mercado Kim

Sen. Chris Lee

Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro

Sen. Glenn Wakai

Sen. Kurt Fevella

Re: HB1964 HD2 SD1 Relating to Early Child Care

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters. On behalf of HSCADV and our 28 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB1964 HD2 SD1**.

The availability of childcare is one of the major economic factors survivors of domestic violence consider when making decisions about their safety such as when and if they can leave an abusive partner. Investing in the childcare workforce and ensuring there are enough professionals in the field to meet our state's needs is not only a public good, but has the potential to contribute to family safety as well.

This bill ensures families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten and we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Please support the creation of a childcare worker subsidy and bonus program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. A 2022 study completed by RAND Corporation in partnership with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa showed that on average, childcare workers earn between \$13 to \$17 per hour. Low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to early childcare employment.

Preschools, childcare providers, and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, which requires public investment. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Angelina Mercado, Executive Director



Hearing Date: **Tuesday, April 4, 2024, 1015 am, Conference Rm. 211**

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1964 HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and the Members of Committees,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1964 HD2, SD1 Relating to Early Child Care which would appropriate funds to require the Department of Human Services to establish and administer a two-year Infant and Toddler Child Care Worker Subsidy Pilot Program and appropriate funds.

Having children actually penalizes women in the workforce. The Institute for Women's Policy Research reports 50.5% of households with children in Hawai'i have mothers who are the main source of family income. However, women working full time make only \$.76 for every dollar working fathers make in Hawaii. One major obstacle preventing mothers from securing a well-paid, stable job is finding and retaining available, affordable, quality childcare.

Early childhood care and educational professionals are undervalued in Hawaii, averaging \$13 to \$17 per hour wage. It is no surprise that the number of professionals in this sector has been decreasing, although they are in high demand. AAUW of Hawaii supports this measure since it would appropriate funds to pilot a wage subsidy program for the early childhood care and educational professionals. Findings from this pilot program will then be used to understand what we need to pay these professionals to retain them. Supporting this bill will aid Hawaii in retaining and recruiting qualified child care workers, including women who want to work in the field, but cannot, or will not, due to the current low wage. It will also increase the number of needed available slots.

Please pass this measure and mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Evans".

Jean Evans
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all-volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kauai, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership.



holomua

COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

OUR VISION

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

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President & Executive Director

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HolomuaCollaborative.org

Page 1 of 2

Committee: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Bill Number: HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care
Hearing Date and Time: April 4, 2024 at 10:15am (Room 211)
Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative in support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

We write in support of HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care. The purpose of HB 1964 is to require the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and group care homes and provide bonuses to registered family child care homes.

Hawai'i is having an increasingly difficult time retaining and recruiting infant and toddler child care workers. Indeed, between 2018 and 2020 Hawai'i lost 20% of its child care workforce. When child care workers leave the profession, it becomes harder for child care providers to stay open. This ultimately makes it harder for families to get child care as demand increases while supply shrinks. And this disparity between supply and demand for child care is why families struggle to pay for facilities that charge \$20,000 per year per child, because that is what they must do to stay afloat.

Holomua supports initiatives that help keep all local working families in Hawai'i by addressing issues of affordability. We are especially interested in fostering cross-sector collaboration and supporting policies that are evidence-based. The subsidy program crafted by the authors of HB 1964 is a perfect example of this.

This solution involves the nonprofit sector (advocates like the Hawai'i Children's Action Network and the Hawai'i Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance) who have created the idea of this program, the government sector (in the form of the Department of Human Services who will be in charge of developing out the program), and the private sector in the form of the child care providers themselves, who are currently faced with not having enough professional employees because they lack the funding to pay them.

The RAND Corporation¹ has noted that as of May 2021, the typical child care worker in Hawai'i earned just under \$13.79 on an hourly basis. When adjusting for cost of living, this is lower than the national median hourly wage for child care workers. This is unsustainable. And it underscores why bringing child care workers in Hawai'i to a rate of not less than \$16 an hour will be critical for recruitment and retention.

¹ See "Early Childhood Educators in Hawai'i: Addressing Compensation, Working Conditions, and Professional Advancement," at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1908-1.html.

Additionally, multiple studies have shown that a person's most dramatic brain development occurs in the first three years of their life. Making sure that the frontline child care workers—who are in charge of molding the minds of babies and other young children during these critical years—are paid well enough to stay in the profession benefits: (1) the child care workers who can now stay in the profession; (2) the children who will receive professional care during critical years; (3) businesses whose employees depend on child care; (4) parents who can stay at their jobs because of greater access to child care; and (5) society as a whole, because a new generation of children will be better prepared to learn, grow, and thrive.

We know that child care providers operate on miniscule financial margins with fixed costs that can't be negotiated or reduced, like rent or electricity. This means that when they need to lower expenses they must turn to wages. And in turn, child care professionals leave the state. If this trend continues, we are likely to have lost more than a quarter of this workforce between 2018 and today.

This collaborative, evidence-based program can break this cycle and put us on a path to greater affordability both for child care workers and for those who need access to child care. We are proud to support it.

Sincerely,



Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director



Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

April 4, 2024

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

We support HB 1964 HD2, SD1, which requires the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care center, group child care centers, and group child care homes and bonuses to registered family child care homes.

We believe that children who have a strong foundation in early learning will be better prepared to enter our K-12 system. Access to quality early learning opportunities is key to building this foundation.

The number of early childhood care and education professionals in Hawai'i has been decreasing over the last 5 years. A recent survey conducted by the Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children found that while many early learning providers would like to expand, the biggest hurdle continues to be recruiting and retaining qualified staff. The child care provider subsidy and bonus program will help support our early learning workforce.

Hui for Excellence in Education, or "HE'E," promotes a child-centered and strength-based public education system in which families, communities and schools are valued and empowered to help every student succeed. HE'E works to bring diverse stakeholders together to harness collective energy, share resources, and identify opportunities for progressive action in education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Our support for this measure represents at least a 75% consensus of our voting membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director



Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21

Alliance for Place Based Learning

American Civil Liberties Union

Atherton YMCA

Education Institute of Hawai'i

*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawai'i

*HawaiiKidsCAN

*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and
Economic Justice

*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

*Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Education Association

Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition

* Hawai'i State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids

*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum

Junior Achievement of Hawaii

Kamehameha Schools

Kanu Hawai'i

Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Kupu A'e

*Leaders for the Next Generation

Learning First

McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds

Native Hawaiian Education Council

Our Public School

*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

*Parents and Children Together

*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Special Education Provider Alliance

*Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

* Youth Service Hawai'i

Voting Members () Voting member organizations vote on action
items while individual and non-voting participants may
collaborate on all efforts within the Coalition*



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday April 4, 2024 at 10:15 a.m.

By

Nathan Murata, Dean
College of Education

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1964 HD2 SD1 – RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i, College of Education supports the intent of HB 1964 HD2 SD1 to improve pay for the professionals who are dedicated to early childhood classrooms. Families must have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten. This measure is the first step toward ensuring that early childhood care and education professionals earn a livable wage.

The demand for quality child care and early education far exceeds the number of qualified child care and early education professionals currently available in the State. According to a RAND Corporation study conducted in partnership with the College of Education/UH Manoa, child care workers in the state earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour. This low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to becoming a childcare worker. This pay low consistently is cited as a barrier to becoming a childcare worker. Interestingly, the number of early childhood care and education professionals in Hawai'i has been decreasing significantly over the last 5-years despite the high demand in this sector. Lastly, Child care and preschools are essential infrastructure. Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good that mandates public investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1964 HD2 SD1.

Date: April 3, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **HB1964 HD2 SD1**, Relating to Early Child Care

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. ECAS 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 HB1964 HD2 SD1, which would establish a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to support compensation and retention of the early care and education workforce in child care centers and family child care homes.

High-quality child care and early learning programs are fundamental to thriving children, flourishing families, and a robust economy. An effective, well-trained, early childhood workforce is the backbone of these programs. This workforce, however, suffers from chronically low wages and turnover.

A 2022 study completed by the RAND Corporation in partnership with the University of Hawaii at Mānoa showed that the average hourly wage for early care and education professionals in Hawaii ranges between \$13 and \$17 per hour. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded the impact of annual workforce turnover rates for early childhood educators that already ranged from 26-40%. Based on national trend data in child care employment, Hawaii is likely to have lost more than a quarter of our early care and learning workforce between 2018 and now.

This erosion in the workforce has reduced existing operating capacity and poses significant barriers to expansion of Hawai'i's child care and early learning programs. In the last six months of 2023 alone, the state experienced the closure of seventeen licensed Group Child Care (GCC) centers and the loss of 640 GCC center slots. Capacity has decreased by over 200 more seats in just the first ten weeks of 2024. Additional capacity is consistently being lost in centers that continue to operate but have reduced capacity due to the inability to fully staff classrooms.

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms and homes. Addressing workforce compensation must start somewhere. Financial relief strategies such as the wage subsidies and bonuses proposed by this bill have been implemented by 37 different states, resulting in significant improvements in teacher/caregiver retention and reductions in turnover rates by half or more.

In order for Hawai'i to meet the education, employment, and economic needs of the state, the state must support and sustain the child care sector and improve families' access to child care and early learning programs by prioritizing strategies to stabilize and expand the early childhood workforce. Towards this end, we strongly urge you to support **HB1964 HD2 SD1**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



April 2, 2024

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: H.B. 1964, H.D. 2, S.D. 1 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE.

**Hearing: Thursday, April 4, 2024, 10:15 a.m.
Conf. Rm 221 & Videoconference**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

Hawaii Women Lawyers (“HWL”) **supports H.B. 1964, H.D. 2, S.D. 1**, which requires the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and group child care homes and bonuses to registered family child care homes.

HWL is a lawyer trade organization that aims to improve the lives and careers of women in all aspects of the legal profession, influence the future of the legal profession, and enhance the status of women and promote equal opportunities for all.

Childcare and early education programs can provide children with opportunities for cognitive, language, emotional, and social development and provide parents with the ability to work and generate income for their families. Providing a solid learning foundation for children, while also fostering productivity for working parents, contributes to the economic stability and prosperity of the State.

Working families in Hawaii need affordable solutions for child care provided by quality child care professionals. Creating incentives through the proposed subsidy program endeavors to retain current providers so that they may continue to offer their valuable services, but it is also likely to help in recruiting and attracting dedicated providers to the early learning workforce.

HWL supports H.B. 1964, H.D. 2, S.D. 1 because it recognizes the importance high-quality childcare and early education, and it strives to make it more available for working parents.

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



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BILL HB1964 HD2 SD1
POSITION: SUPPORT

LATE

Hearing Date: April 4, 2024, 10:15am, Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way strongly supports HB1964 HD2 SD1 which provides subsidies to adequately compensate child care providers, along with a bonus program, to attract and retain our early childcare workforce.

Quality early childcare programs are essential for our communities and workforce and the need for care has grown sharply. The childcare sector cannot grow to meet this need primarily because of the low wages childcare professionals receive, making it incredibly hard to attract new employees to meet workforce needs and or to add childcare seats. Current childcare workers are often living below the ALICE threshold or in poverty, because the current wages are too low to support even the basic needs of their own households.

Aloha United Way and agencies in the ALICE initiative support this bill to build a stronger child care system and measurable increases to income and employment opportunity for ALICE families. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and refers to households who are employed but whose incomes are not enough to meet their basic living costs. A UW's 2022 ALICE report found that **44% of Hawaii's households are ALICE** and showed an alarming 50% increase in ALICE households falling into poverty.

Further, other sectors are suffering from a reduced workforce pool. HB1964 provides **critical childcare workforce support and will help ALICE families** with limited options for childcare, **increase workforce participation and economic growth**, and elevate income for childcare workers. Adequate access to childcare can only happen if the field can attract professional, trained workers who see a viable career that provides living wages. HB1964 is a smart program that can demonstrate a way to increase the workforce and improve economic outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your action to support ALICE households and families across Hawaii by passing HB1964 HD2 SD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Skjold".

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way



733 BISHOP STREET, SUITE 1275
HONOLULU, HI 96813
(808) 522-1101
(808) 522-1103 (FAX)
EMAIL: snandmarycastle@hawaii.rr.com

ALFRED L. CASTLE
Executive Director and Treasurer

THE
SAMUEL N.
AND
MARY CASTLE
FOUNDATION

April 3, 2024

and the
HENRY & DOROTHY CASTLE
MEMORIAL FUND

To: Senators Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Sharon Y. Moriwaki and
Committee Members

From: Alfred L. Castle

Re: HB 1964

Aloha Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,
I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

The bill is important to Hawaii's families and Keiki. In addition, as we work to implement LG Luke's Ready Keiki work, we realize that the lack of care givers and teachers may prevent universal access to early care and learning may not be possible. The subsidy program is vital to the legislature's goal to ensure greater equity in education outcomes.

Mahalo!

Alfred L. Castle
Executive Director



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 10:15AM
Conference Room 211 & Video Conference**

LATE

RE: HB1964 HD2 SD1 Relating to Early Child Care

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii (“The Chamber”) **supports HB1964 HD2 SD1**, which establishes and appropriates funds to implement a childcare provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing childcare workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and group child care homes and bonuses to registered family child care homes.

Limited access to childcare is one of the challenges that our local workforce faces today and a significant reason for Hawaii’s overall workforce shortage. Low wages and a high cost of living make it difficult for childcare facilities to retain and grow the workforce. This measure, if implemented, would Hawaii’s businesses and further their capacity for workforce retention and expansion, creating profound economic benefit to our state now and in the future.

Increasing the availability of childcare and providing necessary support to strengthen our childcare and early education workforce is of high priority to the Chamber, and critical for our workforce viability and economic future. Our business community and its workforce cannot increase its capacity without support such as that which would be provided by this measure.

In discussions with our members, increasing the availability of childcare is a high priority. This measure mitigates childcare provider business closures and will help to increase the availability of childcare providers needed for the viability of our workforce. Our business community and workforce cannot increase its capacity without such support.

The Chamber is Hawaii’s leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the “Voice of Business” in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state’s economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

On behalf of the Chamber, thank you for this opportunity to testify.



April 4, 2024

TO: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair
Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus

RE: HB 1964 HD2 SD1 Relating to Early Child Care

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus write in support of HB 1964 HD 2 SD1 Relating to Early Child Care which would establish a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to retain the existing child care workforce which is severely under staffed.

It is essential that we have quality, affordable child care and early education programs that are staffed by qualified child care and early education professionals. The shortage of these professionals has hampered the expansion of sorely needed programs, limiting access to quality child care for many of Hawaii's working families. Provider subsidies would help alleviate barriers to expansion of programs.

This is priority measure for the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus. The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls.

We also respectfully request that the Committee pass this important measure and also provide the funds necessary for the program. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony in support of HB 1964 HD2 SD1 Relating to Early Child Care.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 10:56:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zoe Brooks-Jeffiers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki, and committee members , my name is Zoe Brooks-Jeffiers.

I am testifying in support of HB1964, which would establish a child care provider subsidy and bonus program. This will help us keep the current child care workforce, hire new workers, and ultimately open up more child care seats for families and keiki.

Families across the state are struggling to afford the basic needs of their household. The limited access to affordable childcare is only amplifying the struggles of our communities to thrive and remain in our islands. It is time to invest in the childcare workforce, our families, and our keiki. Our workers deserve living wages and our families deserve affordable and accessible to child care so they can participate in the workforce as well. This will help ensure they can afford the basic necessities of life such as food and housing.

Please support this bill and pass it. Thank you for listening and allowing me to share my support of bill HB1964.

Committee on Human Services
Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki
Date: April 4, 2024
Time: 10:15 a.m..
Place: Via Videoconference
Conference Room 211
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Bill: **HB 1964 HD 2 SD1**
Position: **IN SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and respected committee members,

Thank you for hearing **HB 1964 HD 2 SD1**. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1964 HD 2**.

My name is Malia Tsuchiya. I am a mother of five and former child care provider. I no longer work as a childcare provider because the wages are not enough to make a living wage. I would love to return to childcare and education but it is not a viable option for me and my family.

My youngest child turned three recently and I know through experience that the options for quality affordable childcare are very limited. Through experience, I have also found that staffing is a problem that has, and is continuing to negatively impact the ability for programs to remain in service to the community.

According to a study done by RAND corporation childcare workers in Hawaii make \$13-\$17 dollars. From 2018-2020 over 20% of Hawaii's Early Childcare Workforce left the workforce. ARPA funding helped to stem the mass exodus of childcare workers from the field. Unfortunately, ARPA funds are expiring and this extra support that helped so much will no longer be available to stabilize programs and workforce.

Both anecdotal and quantitative research consistently shows that low wages are a significant deterrent to the recruitment and retention of childcare workers. Without a strong commitment to increasing wages for childcare workers the trend of lost childcare spaces due to staffing shortages will continue. I humbly ask for your support in lifting childcare wages through subsidies and bonuses. Please help our childcare programs stay open and make being a childcare worker a viable option for current and future workers.

Please vote **IN FAVOR of HB 1964 HD 2 SD1**.

Thank you for your time and commitment to serving Hawai'i's people and for supporting the early childhood workforce that supports working parents like me.

Sincerely,
Malia Tsuchiya

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 2:14:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom. I live in Mō'ili'ili. I'm writing in strong support for HB1964 HD2 SD1, which aims to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program in Hawaii. This program is critical for supporting the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and group child care homes, while also providing bonuses to registered family child care homes. Additionally, I stand in support of the efforts by the Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) to advocate for the well-being of children and families in Hawai'i.

Child care is not just a service; it is a fundamental support system for working families, allowing parents to pursue their careers while ensuring their children receive quality care and early education. However, the child care industry faces significant challenges, including low wages for providers and limited affordability for families. HB1964 HD2 SD1 addresses these challenges by establishing a subsidy and bonus program, which will help retain the existing child care workforce by providing much-needed financial support.

By investing in our child care providers, we are investing in the future of our children and our state. High-quality early childhood education has been proven to have long-term benefits, including improved academic outcomes, increased earning potential, and reduced likelihood of involvement in the criminal justice system. Moreover, supporting the child care workforce is essential for ensuring that families have access to reliable and affordable child care options, allowing them to participate fully in the workforce and contribute to our economy.

Furthermore, I appreciate the provision in HB1964 HD2 SD1 that requires annual reports to the Legislature. Transparency and accountability are crucial for ensuring that taxpayer dollars are being used effectively and efficiently. These reports will allow policymakers to evaluate the effectiveness of the subsidy and bonus program and make any necessary adjustments to better serve our child care providers and families.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB1964 HD2 SD1 and to prioritize the well-being of Hawaii's children and families. By investing in our child care workforce, we are laying the foundation for a brighter future for all.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili, O'ahu - 96826

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 2:23:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing this measure which would supplement the wage of early childhood professionals. Early childhood professionals deserve a living wage since they make all other work possible.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 2:37:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

This bill is important to me *because my husband and I raised 3 children in Hawaii and relied on affordable quality day care and pre-school when they were young and on the A+ program once in kindergarten.* They now need these services to be available. Quality day care may keep our adult children in Hawaii.

Mahalo!

April 2, 2024

Committee – Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Measure – HB1964 HD2 SD1 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

Hearing Date – April 4, 2024

Time - 10:15 AM

Location - Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

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. **This testimony is in strong support of HB1964 HD2 SD1.**

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1964 HD 1 SD1, which establishes a child care worker subsidy and bonus program (wage supplement program) for staff working in Department of Human Services (DHS) licensed infant toddler centers, group child care centers, and regulated family child care homes.

HB1964 HD1 SD1 will provide much-needed wage supplements essential for recruiting and retaining early care and education professionals and keeping our child care and early learning programs open. This will allow parents with young children to have accessible and stable child care options so they can work and/or return to school.

The current situation, as highlighted by a [RAND study](#) commissioned by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, reveals that child care workers in our state are earning between \$13 and \$17 per hour. These low wages has resulted in a disturbing number of early educators who have left the profession for other industries, creating dire consequences for children, families, employers, and our society as a whole.

Retaining quality early educators is crucial for children's physical, cognitive, social-emotional development, readiness for school, and long-term academic success. Improved pay for educators contributes to the overall quality and stability of child care and early learning programs.

Moreover, a wage supplement program can prevent early learning program closures and potentially open up more child care slots. Given that early childhood education heavily depends on its workforce, as much as [90% of the program's budget](#) may be allocated to staff and personnel wages. Fixed expenses, like rent and utilities, leave staff wages as one of the only areas where child care programs can cut. Because of the low wages, many early educators choose not to stay, and programs are forced to

shut down classrooms because of a lack of staff. Wage supplements can help early educators stay in their profession, thus protecting child care programs from closing.

The effectiveness of wage supplement programs has been demonstrated in other states. One of which is [North Carolina's Child Care WAGES](#), a program that reduced their state's early educator turnover rate from 31% to 14%. Additionally, the infusion of federal relief dollars through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) has been instrumental in helping child care providers across the nation stay open and make necessary workforce investments. This evidence suggests that implementing a wage supplement program in Hawai'i is not only feasible but also a proven strategy to address the workforce shortage in the ECE sector.

HB1964 HD1 SD1 will allow licensed infant and toddler child care centers and group child care centers to apply for and receive a subsidy to increase the pay of its child care workers to a rate of not less than \$16.00 per hour. This aligns with the RAND Study which found that the median starting hourly wage for assistant teachers working in licensed child care centers is \$15.50. The starting wage for teachers with child development associate credentials is \$16. For teachers with associate degrees, it's \$17, and it's the same for teachers with bachelor's degrees or higher in fields other than early childhood education or child development. Teachers who have bachelor's degrees or higher in those fields have a median starting hourly wage of \$18.25.

HB1964 HD1 SD1 will allow regulated family child care homes to apply for and receive a bonus of at least \$6,000 per year. In the RAND study, family child care providers who participated in the study reported being paid substantially less preschool directors, even if they worked the same number of hours. These family child care providers also reported that a substantial workforce challenge was their limited access to benefits.

In conclusion, **I urge you to please support HB1964 HD1 SD1**. Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good that mandates public investment.

Mahalo for your your leadership and attention to this critical matter.

Dr. Terry Lock

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 2:46:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katinka Somers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I wholeheartedly support HB1964, which aims to create a child care worker subsidy program to increase wages for early childhood care and education professionals. As a parent who has witnessed firsthand the invaluable role these educators play in our children's lives, I urge you to prioritize this bill.

Early childhood educators are not just caretakers; they are the first teachers our children encounter outside the family. They shape young minds, instilling essential skills and values that lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning. Despite their crucial role, they are often undervalued and underpaid.

By investing in higher wages for these dedicated professionals, we not only recognize the importance of their work but also ensure the quality and stability of our child care system. Adequate compensation attracts and retains talented individuals, ultimately benefiting our children and society as a whole.

I have personally experienced the impact of poorly trained staff and also a shortage of staff in the early childhood development space. Like many parents in my community, I have faced challenges in accessing quality child care services due to limited options and long waitlists.

As the owner of a swim school teaching small children I have heard countless stories from parents echoing the exact issues I have raised and this initiative will make headway on this issue.

In conclusion, HB1964 is a crucial step towards valuing and supporting our early childhood educators. By doing so, we invest in the future of our children and our community. Mahalo for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Katinka Somers

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 3:08:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Adam Tose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for ****HB1964****, which aims to establish a child care worker subsidy program. As an advocate for early childhood care and education, I believe this bill is a crucial step toward improving wages for child care professionals and ensuring that families have access to quality and affordable child care services.

Child care workers play a vital role in our communities, nurturing and educating our youngest learners. However, their compensation often does not reflect the essential work they do. By creating a subsidy program, we can address this disparity and provide much-needed financial support to those who dedicate themselves to caring for our children.

****HB1964**** not only benefits child care workers but also directly impacts families. Access to affordable child care is essential for parents who need to work or pursue education. When child care professionals are adequately compensated, they can continue to provide high-quality care, fostering healthy development in our children.

I urge you to support this bill, recognizing its potential to strengthen our early childhood care system and create a positive impact on both child care workers and the families they serve.

Mahalo for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Adam Rose

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 3:29:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

Mahalo!

Andrew Isoda

Lahaina, Mau'i

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 4:07:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

Melanie Nishita
48 Kihalani Pl. #3705
Kihei, HI 96753
808-281-4959

Regarding HB 1964 – Relating to Early Childcare

WAM Committee

April 4, 2024 at 10:15am

IN SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy and bonus program. It's a sad day when our teachers are making more working at a fast-food place than they do caring for our precious children. **Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state.** It is critical to provide a way for these workers to stay in this profession before we lose even more.

Our school provides the opportunity for 80 families to have their child receive a high-quality early education. It also provides families with quality care that enables them to join the workforce. I have been the director here for over 20 years. We had a well-educated, long-time staff that created a solid foundation for our precious children's care and education.

Turnover was very minimal, however, just in the last year I have lost 4 staff members. One with a CDA, 2 with Bachelor's and one with a Master's degree, all in Early Childhood Education. We just lost 4 well-educated and solid teachers. They were amazing with the children and did a phenomenal job at preparing them for their formal school years. All 4 of them left regrettably but the reality was they could no longer work for the pay. I have not been able to fill those positions. I cannot find teachers (or even aides for that matter) who will do such a demanding job for the little pay they receive.

Sadly, I've come to the place where I have no choice but to downsize considerably in the new school year (2024-2025). I have over 150 people on my waiting list but will only be able to take a small fraction of them.

I believe a strong today builds a strong tomorrow! Help us to build our tomorrow! **Please support this measure.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Melanie Nishita

Committee on Human Services

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki

Date: Thursday, February 1, 2024

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: Via Videoconference

Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Bill: **HB 1964**

Position: **IN SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Morikawa and respected committee members:

Thank you for hearing **HB 1964**. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1964**.

My name is Donja Morton. I am a wife, mother of three and a current Center Director of a licensed and accredited Early Childhood Education Center. I am writing my testimony as a private citizen who has worked in this profession since 1984.

Over the four decades I have seen many changes within my beloved profession. First starting as an aide, then a preschool teacher, and eventually an administrator, I have spent a lifetime earning three college degrees in addition to a Child Development Associate and growing in my field of work. I have many positive professional experiences but do want to speak on the negative impact of low wages within my industry.

According to a study done by RAND Corporation, childcare workers in Hawaii make \$13-\$17 dollars an hour. From 2018-2020 over 20% of Hawaii's Early Childcare Workforce left the workforce due to low wages. ARPA funding helped to stem the mass exodus of childcare workers from the field. Unfortunately, ARPA funds are expiring September 2024 and this extra support that helped will no longer be available.

Both anecdotal and quantitative research consistently show that low wages are a significant deterrent to the recruitment and retention of childcare workers. Certainly, early childcare educators deserve a livable wage. Without a strong commitment to increasing wages for childcare workers the trend of lost childcare spaces due to staffing shortages will continue.

Early childcare educators go to work with their trainings and college degrees that are specialized for young lives ages zero through five. On-going annual trainings and clocked hours are required. To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of these classrooms.

Thank you for your time and commitment to serving Hawaii's families and all of us who are caring for Hawaii's keiki. Please support Hawaii's 3,410 early childcare educators by increasing wages for employees through subsidies.

Sincerely,

Donja Morton

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 5:23:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystal Jo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and committee members,

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy and bonus program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. A 2022 study completed by RAND Corporation in partnership with University of Hawai'i at Mānoa showed that on average, child care workers earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour. Low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to early child care employment.

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.

I am currently a lead teacher at a private group child care center and have been for the past two years. However, I am leaving that center this upcoming fall for a higher paying ECE position in the public schools because it is no longer financially feasible to work in a child care center full time and also put my child in child care when she turns one year old. The financial stress of only earning a little over \$17/hr when I have a bachelors and masters degree is no longer reasonable. Higher pay for early childhood educators is essential to keeping childcare available for so many families.

Please support this measure. Mahalo.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 5:26:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheri Funasaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Way and Means Committee

Bill or Resolution number: HB1964

Day and Date of Hearing 4-4-24

IN SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz , Vice- Chair Moriwaki and committee members,

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy and bonus program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. A 2022 study completed by RAND Corporation in partnership with University of Hawai'i at Mānoa showed that on average, child care workers earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour. Low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to early child care employment.

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.

Please support this measure.

Mahalo, Sheri Funasaki

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 5:27:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary Emelle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and

Committee Members

HB 1964 , April 4, 2024

Thursday, 10:15am

Families need access to quality early childhood care & education, from birth to kindergarten. We must improve the pay for Early Childhood Education (ECE) professionals who are the heart of the ECE classroom. Low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to becoming a childcare worker.

Please support the creation of a childcare worker subsidy & bonus program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care & education professionals.

Hawai'i's preschool population is our future and requires public investment to provide quality preschool education. As a retired preschool (Hawai'i DOE) teacher, I understand firsthand the ongoing need for public investment in ECE.

Early childhood care & education professionals are the workforce behind other workforces.

The state must create immediate long term solutions.

Please support this measure.

Gary Emelle, M.Ed.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 5:27:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Pimentel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee on Human Services

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki

Date: April 4, 2024

Time: 10:15 a.m..

Place: Via Videoconference

Conference Room 211

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Bill: HB 1964 HD 2 SD1

Position: IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and respected committee members,

Thank you for hearing HB 1964 HD 2 SD1. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1964 HD 2.**

Committee on Human Services
Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki
Date: April 4, 2024
Time: 10:15 a.m..
Place: Via Videoconference
Conference Room 211
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Bill: HB 1964 HD 2 SD1
Position: IN SUPPORT

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and respected committee members,

Thank you for hearing **HB 1964 HD 2 SDI**. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1964 HD2**.

My name is Johnnetta Jordan-Piper and I have been running veteran owned Smaller Scholar LLC, a licensed and registered family childcare home in Mililani, Hawaii since 2018. With over 20 years of experience as a Military Family Childcare provider, I am a proud member of the National Association for Family Childcare. I also serve as the Vice-President of the Honolulu Community Action Program Policy Committee.

I write to you today to urge your immediate attention and support for House Bill 1964 HD 2 SDI, a crucial piece of legislation aimed at providing a wage supplement for childcare workers in our state. As the backbone of the care sector, childcare workers play an indispensable role in nurturing our children and supporting working families across Hawaii.

It is imperative to recognize that personnel expenditures constitute a substantial portion of any childcare facility's budget. Without adequate compensation and support for these essential workers, the quality of childcare services provided may be compromised, ultimately affecting the well-being and development of our children.

I encourage you to support childcare workers who provide care for our children, such as Sue. Sue became an American citizen after graduating from high school in 2019 and has been working hard to support her new family ever since. She is a full-time childcare worker with two children of her own aged 2 and 4. In addition to her full-time job, she also works two part-time jobs, one as a youth worker and the other as a corporate childcare provider, which means she works up to 70 hours per week. Despite her hard work, she earns no more than \$40K annually from all three jobs. Sue cannot afford discounted childcare rates and relies on her family to take care of her children while she works.

Sue is passionate about her profession and is pursuing her Child Development Associate to increase her pay and further grow in her career. This young family is facing challenges while living in Hawaii, but they are supported by their family not only with childcare but also financially.

Therefore, I urge you to take necessary steps to support childcare workers, like Sue, who have chosen to provide care for our children. They play a crucial role in our society and should be compensated accordingly. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

Johnnetta Jordan-Piper

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 6:48:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members, I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care. This bill is important to me! Mahalo!

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 7:38:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kee Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki and committee members,

To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy and bonus program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. A 2022 study completed by RAND Corporation in partnership with University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa showed that on average, child care workers earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour. Low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to early child care employment.

Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.

Please support this measure.

Kee Lo

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 7:48:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey A Drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this!

Thank you

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 8:10:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I

respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB1964 HD2 SD1.

The availability of childcare is one of the major economic factors survivors of domestic violence consider when making decisions about their safety such as when and if they can leave an abusive partner. Investing in the childcare workforce and ensuring there are enough professionals in the field to meet our state’s needs is not only a public good, but has the potential to contribute to family safety as well.

This bill ensures families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten and we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms. Please support the creation of a childcare worker subsidy and bonus program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. A 2022 study completed by RAND Corporation in partnership with the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa showed that on average, childcare workers earn between \$13 to \$17 per hour. Low pay is consistently cited as a barrier to early childcare employment.

Preschools, childcare providers, and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, which requires public investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Gwen Rodrigues

Hilo

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2024 10:10:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals.

This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

This bill is important to me because I think if we don't support our kids, our kids are less likely to be willing and able to help us when we need it.

I think we all know it is far more difficult now for younger generations to attain a middle class lifesytle while also saving for their own reitirement.

As a result, I think it behooves us to invest more in out kids even if only out of self-interest, but ideally because it is the right thing to do regardless of self-interest.

Mahalo!

Thomas Brandt

Katherine T. Kupukaa
Mililani, HI 96789

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR

DATE: Thursday, 4/4/2024
TIME: 10:15 AM
PLACE: CONFERENCE ROOM 211

Bill HB 1964, HD2, SD1 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

I oppose passing this bill because it is not the government's business to provide early childhood care but it is the families responsibility to care for their early childhood care.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 12:05:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1964 HD2 SD1. In order to have a thriving ecosystem of care for our keiki, we need to support the people who care for them. This means paying our childhood care workers and education professionals living wages. They need to be retained and multiplied, and this bill would certainly help.

Mahalo for your consideration.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

PERSON TESTIFYING: Dena Akiu

DATE: April 4, 2024

TIME: 10:15 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

TITLE OF BILL: HB 1964 HD1 SD2 RELATING TO EARLY CHILD CARE

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

I am submitting testimony in strong **SUPPORT** of **HB 1964 HD2 SD1**.

The long-term benefits and supports that quality early learning programs provide is crucial in a young child's most formative years. I've experienced these positive impacts in each of my roles as a mother, grandmother, and an early childhood educator. In strengthening the early childhood educator workforce, we strengthen our youngest learners by building their brain development and instilling a positive disposition for life-long learning.

Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. According to a [2022 study](#) conducted by the RAND Corporation in partnership with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE3) Project, median hourly wages, estimated at approximately \$13–\$17 per hour, are well below the living wage estimate of at least \$28.50 per hour for the state. Although median wages for child care workers in Hawaii exceed the national median, the pattern is reversed once the high cost of living in the state is accounted for.

Early educators are engaged in incredibly difficult and complex work that has been recognized as essential to children's learning and development, supportive for families, and foundational to the economy. Preschools, child care providers and families already carry a heavy burden. We cannot carry more without your support.

Please support the creation of a child care worker subsidy pilot program. It is the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals that do so much for Hawai'i's young children and families.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of this measure. Please vote in favor of HB 1964 HD2 SD1.

Mahalo,
Dena Akiu

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 1:48:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ed Akiu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting testimony in strong **SUPPORT** of **HB 1964 HD2 SD1**.

Please support this measure to improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of early childhood classrooms. Families must have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten. This measure is the first step toward ensuring that early childhood care and education professionals earn a livable wage.

Mahalo.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 6:16:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raya Esteban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and committee members,

Please support HB 1964, which would support the creation of a child care worker subsidy and bonus program as the first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. To ensure families have access to early childhood care and education from birth to kindergarten, we must improve pay for the professionals who are the heart of those classrooms.

Hawai‘i’s early childhood care and education professionals are some of the most undervalued in our state. In piloting solutions, we want to start with those most likely to be farthest from fair wages. A [2022 study](#) completed by the University of Hawai‘i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity Project showed that, on average, child care workers earn between \$13 and \$17 per hour. National trends suggest that the younger the child is that you educate and care for, the lower your pay is likely to be.

I was a preschool teacher for three years, and though I loved my job, I often struggled to make ends meet. I had to take on multiple jobs to supplement my income and earn a livable wage; oftentimes, the toll of working numerous jobs left me exhausted and unable to provide the quality care my kids deserved. At the time, I was living under my parents’ roof, and so I did not have to pay for rent. But if I had to account for housing expenses, there would have been no possibility for me to fulfill my vocation as an early childhood educator. This would have been a huge waste of my talent, expertise, and dedication for early childhood care and education—a professional field that requires specialized skills and knowledge.

Any individual with the passion and skill to care for and educate young children should not have to suffer through poverty-level wages as a consequence. That is an injustice to our early care educators, to the children and families that they serve, and the whole of society that depends on

the early childhood education workforce to mold the minds and hearts of our next generation of leaders.

Furthermore, early learning programs depend on staff to maintain their operations. If more and more early childhood education professionals leave the field because of low wages, we will have no one to care for our keiki, and early learning programs may be forced to shut down. This will have devastating outcomes for children, who deserve safe, stable, and nurturing environments particularly in the formative years of their lives. It will also severely impact parents, who seek spaces where their children can receive the care and education they need to grow and thrive. It affects business owners and employers of parents, who may have to quit their jobs if child care is unavailable. And of course, our society will be adversely affected by a shortage of high-quality early learning settings, which play a crucial role in developing our keiki into compassionate, empathetic, and productive citizens who actively contribute to our communities.

Preschools, child care providers, and families already carry a heavy burden. They cannot carry more without support. Because Hawai'i's early childhood care and education professionals provide a public good, it requires public investment.

Please support this measure.

Mahalo,

Raya Esteban

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 7:39:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB1964 HD2 SD1 which requires the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and group child care homes and bonuses to registered family child care homes. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Makes an appropriation. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. ANY way that we can retain and assist those who give care to our keiki should be supported by us. As an early child care worker for many years, the current situations are not sustainable to retain excellent experiences for all.

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 8:11:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Barzman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

Mahalo!

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 8:28:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Tokunaga May	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Committee Members

I am in full support of HB1964 related to childcare worker subsidy program. Our youngest keiki are our brightest hope and most vulnerable. The early years are the most critical for healthy development and learning. We need the best teachers and workers that will love, care for and teach them. Yet, we pay these workers the least and under value their services. This program will help to keep quality workers with a more liveable income and attract the best childcare workers into this field. Our keiki deserve the best start in life. Investing in them at the beginning will reap benefits throughout their lives with this strong foundation.

I highly encourage you to pass HB1964.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Shelly Tokunaga May, LSW, EdD

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 8:48:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Delafield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

This bill is important to me because the problem of undercompensation for early childhood care and educational professionals has been long standing in this community. My children are older now, but I remember struggling to find quality and affordable child care for my infants and toddlers. Now my sisters are facing the same struggle with their young ones. This is vital work that continues to be undervalued and undercompensated. Please support this bill.

Mahalo!

Rebecca Delafield (Honolulu resident)



April 4, 2024

Committee: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Bill Number: HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care
Hearing Date and Time: April 4, 2024, 10:15am
Re: Testimony of HPM Building Supply in Support

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

I would like to submit this written testimony in support of HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care. The purpose of HB 1964 is to create a subsidy program to support childcare workers.

HPM Building Supply is a 100% employee-owned company serving Hawaii's home improvement market and building industry for over 100 years since 1921. With 18 locations across Hawai'i and Washington State, HPM offers various services and products, including retail stores, building supply and lumber yards, home design centers, drafting and design services, and manufacturing facilities. HPM is dedicated to enhancing homes, improving lives, and transforming communities.

As a State-wide employer with over 600 employees, we understand that many of our employees face childcare decisions daily. Much-needed childcare services gives parents peace of mind to go to work knowing their child is being taken care of.

This bill seeks to improve the support of childcare workers by increasing wages by appropriating State funds. These early childhood workers are underpaid, and they provide a necessary public good. Increasing the minimum wage of these workers and providing a bonus program would assist with recruitment and retention.

This bill also aligns with HPM's values of Heart, Character, and Growth. By supporting early childhood workers and educators, we invest in our future. We show that we care about the future generations and our current workforce shaping it. Our company's value of Heart is caring for one another as a community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1964. I strongly encourage your support and passage of this measure.

Sincerely,

Dennis Lin
Community Relations Administrator





TITLE GUARANTY
HAWAII

April 4, 2024

Testimony in support of HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to the Early Child Care

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee,

We write in support of HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care, which requires the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care center, group child care centers, and group child care homes.

Title Guaranty of Hawai'i is the oldest and largest title company in the state. We have been owned and operated by a kama'aina family since 1896 and we are proud to employ over 250 people who work in our branches all across the state. Being a longtime employer of so many people in Hawai'i, we know how important it is that our employees have access to quality and affordable child care. But we also know it's difficult for people to obtain child care in Hawai'i and when they do, it can be prohibitively expensive. For many parents, including those who work for us, being able to access child care they can afford is what allows them to continue to work. So, not having access is bad for us as an employer, stressful for the parents who we employ, and—most importantly—detrimental to the children. As not just a longtime employer, but also a committed member of our local community, we're lending our voice to support this effort because it is so important.

Early childhood care and education professionals are critical to young children's development. It is in their first three years when children's brains develop most rapidly. That means infant and toddler child care providers are critical to shaping the next generation of responsible, curious and contributing Hawai'i residents. These professionals come to their work with training that is specialized so that they can work with young children to grow and learn in developmentally appropriate ways. But we do not pay these folks nearly enough, which is why so many of them are leaving the profession. We can't afford to keep losing them.

This child care worker subsidy program is a smart first step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals, and we are happy to support it.

Sincerely,

Mike B. Pietsch
President and Chief Operating Officer
Title Guaranty of Hawai'i



Title and Escrow is our business. Hawaii is our home.



Statement of
Meli James
Cofounder
Mana Up

HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care

Aloha,

On behalf of Mana Up, I write in support of HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care. Hawai'i is having an increasingly difficult time retaining and recruiting infant and toddler child care workers. Indeed, between 2018 and 2020 Hawai'i lost 20% of its child care workforce. When child care workers leave the profession, it becomes harder for child care providers to stay open. This ultimately makes it harder for families to get child care as demand increases while supply shrinks. And this disparity between supply and demand for child care is why families struggle to pay for facilities that charge \$20,000 per year per child, because that is what they must do to stay afloat.

Mana Up supports innovative initiatives that help make Hawai'i affordable to all working families. Mana Up is a statewide initiative that supports entrepreneurs in Hawai'i, providing them with resources and tools to scale globally. As these entrepreneurs continue to grow, they also help to sustain the local community through economic diversification, local job creation, givebacks, investment, and a regenerative culture of entrepreneurship – providing a better future for generations to come here in Hawai'i. In fact, many of these entrepreneurs we work with who are helping contribute to growing our local economy having families, including young children requiring child care to be able to run their businesses and sometimes a full-time corporate job as well.

We know that child care providers operate on miniscule financial margins with fixed costs that can't be negotiated or reduced, like rent or electricity. This means that when they need to lower expenses they must turn to wages. And in turn, child care professionals leave the state. If this trend continues, we are likely to have lost more than a quarter of this workforce between 2018 and today.

This program is the type of innovative, collaborative, evidence-based program that can break this cycle and put us on a path to greater affordability both for child care workers



and for those who need access to child care. We are proud to support it. We appreciate the opportunity for Mana Up to testify.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of Mana Up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meli James', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Meli James
Cofounder, Mana Up



Testimony in Support of HB 1964, HD2, SD1, Relating to Early Child Care

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee,

We write in strong support of HB 1964, HD2, SD1, which will require the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to adequately compensate and retain the existing early child care workforce in all licensed and infant toddler child care centers, group child care centers, and registered family child care homes.

aio is a locally owned company with holdings across a broad range of industries. Our companies are purpose-driven and firmly rooted in local values. At aio, Hawai'i is at our core, and through our products and services, we work hard to make Hawai'i a better place for future generations.

Our employees are our greatest asset, and we want to ensure that they have access to quality and affordable childcare for their keiki. This subsidy program is a good first step at retaining top child care professionals.

Research shows that early childhood care professionals are critical to a child's development, and we want the best care possible to teach and mold the next generation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brandon Kurisu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brandon Kurisu
aio Family of Companies



HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 9:50:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deb Nehmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please please please support this bill which is vital for the well being of our keiki and those who care for them,

Mahalo,

Deb Nehmad

Alexandria Domingo
856 Upalu St.
Wailuku, HI., 96793
(808)357-8327
eddieandal@msn.com

April 2, 2024

Aloha Human Services Committee Members:

I'm an advocate for early care and education and a longtime Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HiAEYC, an affiliate of NAEYC) member, and I am in support of **HB1964 HD2 SD1**.

By investing in higher wages for childcare workers, we demonstrate our appreciation for their essential role in our childcare system. A well-compensated workforce will attract and retain qualified professionals, enhancing the quality of care and education provided to the keiki of Hawai'i.

Your support of this measure is greatly appreciated.

Mahalo,



Alexandria Domingo

LATE

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 10:39:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Myers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

This bill is important to me because I have a 4-year-old son who attends a private preschool in Kailua and I have seen first hand what these educators are doing for our keiki. With the current pace of inflation it is nearly impossible for these schools to pay teachers a living wage and still be able to provide affordable and quality care. I urge the committee to support this and any other bill that can provide assistance to our teachers and education professionals. There is nothing more important than the care and wellbeing of our keiki. They are our future!

Mahalo!

Michael Myers

LATE

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 10:58:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ka'ale'a Kyrstin Hanawahine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill!!!

Ka'ale'a Hanawahine

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 12:30:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. This bill not only helps us retain current childcare workers, but helps ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care.

Mahalo for your time

With grattiude,

Leilan Kailiawa

Send DataSend Data

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 12:43:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elaine Yamashita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please pass this bill. The action and funding are sorely needed to stabilize our early childhood workforce. The ARPA funds were greatly appreciated by child care professionals and this would help assure that we do not go through another wave of lost staff due to low compensation.

Mahalo,

Elaine Yamashita

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 1:03:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allie Chamberlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB1964, which would create a child care worker subsidy program as a step toward improving wages for early childhood care and education professionals. I have worked in the education field for years, and one of the only constants among many educational fads that come and go has been the critical importance of ensuring our keiki receive a strong foundation to set them up for success. Our child care workforce is what makes this happen.

Additionally, as the parent of two young children (ages 3 and 2) I see firsthand every single day the dedication, expertise, patience, and pure hard work that child care workers give to our keiki. They work tirelessly, but I know they are tired. This bill would give them the support they so desperately need to continue doing the important job that they do--and do so well.

Educators, including child care workers, are professionals. It's time we recognize them and compensate them as such.

Mahalo!

Allie Chamberlin

LATE

To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Date/Time: April 4, 2024, 10:15am

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 211 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong supports HB1964 HD2 SD1 Relating to Early Child Care

Dear Chair Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki and members of the Committee on Health & Human Services,

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, support HB1964 HD2 SD1 Relating to Early Child Care.

This bill will help keep the Child Care workers we have and assist in the hiring of more Child Care workers which will help increase the number of Child Care seats available.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB1964 HD2 SD1.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 7:50:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion McHenry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is sorely needed to support early childhood education and childcare in our state. We desperately need public funds to help recruit and retain qualified teachers and care givers for our keiki and the families of our working parents. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Marion McHenry

Princeville, Kauai

HB-1964-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 9:05:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Keilee Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

My name is Amanda Johnson, and I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of HB 1964 HD 2 SD 1, which would establish and implement a childcare provider subsidy and a bonus program and help us retain our licensed infant and toddler childcare workforce.



HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

Defending and Respecting the workers of
Hawaii'i

(503) WORKERS ☎

(503) 967- 5377 ☎

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April 3, 2024

Hawaii State Senate
Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Executive Board
Committee

Rev. Sam Domingo
Board Chair

Mary Ochs
Vice Chair

Dr. Arcelita Imasa
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John Witeck
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Ray Catania

Justin Jansen

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Leyton Torda

Kami Yamamoto

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for HB 1964

Dear Chair Sen. Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Sen. Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

The Hawaii Workers Center (HWC) envisions a Hawaii in which all workers are empowered to exercise their right to organize for their social, economic and political well-being. It is a resource of information, education, training and organizing for Hawaii's workers

The HWC stands in strong support of HB 1964 which requires the Department of Human Services to establish and implement a child care provider subsidy and bonus program to provide subsidies to retain the existing child care workforce in licensed infant and toddler child care centers.

The work done of child care providers is truly astonishing. They help “potty-train” our children, take care of them so we can work, and more important, play a vital role in our children’s early childhood development. Yet, many of them barely make above the minimum wage. With Hawaii’s high costs of living and low pay, they’re voting with their feet by leaving the islands for better opportunities. This bill will help address this issue and show the respect and appreciation that child care providers deserve.

We ask that you please pass and support HB 1964.

Executive Director
Sergio Alcubilla III, Esq.

Sincerely,

Sergio Alcubilla
Executive Director