



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/03/2026

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: FIN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1891, HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offer professional development on structured literacy and evidenced-based interventions, and support pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) is providing comments on HB 1891 HD1 as it supports one of the Literacy Levers identified as a priority across the state and the Department is already moving towards implementation.

The Department convened a workgroup and is currently finalizing a list of approved dyslexia-sensitive screeners. The Department wants to clarify that the dyslexia-sensitive screener identifies students with potential reading challenges and does not diagnose dyslexia. Following appropriate intervention informed by universal screener data and ongoing progress monitoring through the Hawai'i Multi-tiered Systems of Supports in Reading (HMTSS-R) process, students who continue to struggle may move through the established review process to determine whether additional assessment is warranted.

Professional learning for opportunities in complex areas and public schools is currently available at no cost for the training, as the Department has identified and is partnering with open-source free courses for teachers in PreK-12. All schools have the opportunity to participate in open-source literacy coaching training, as well as ongoing training in the implementation of HMTSS-R for all schools across the state. Some schools will need to cover substitute costs or stipends. The Department is also offering ongoing training in the implementation of HMTSS-R for all schools across the state.

Through the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant II, one component focuses on collaborating with higher education institutions that provide teacher preparation programs to strengthen the foundational literacy instructional skills of teachers entering the Department.

The Department appreciates the HD 1 version that has adjusted the phased in implementation dates as the Department is planning for the first implementation phase in schools to begin in SY 2026-27, and full implementation during SY 2028-29.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, ED. D.
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HB 1891 HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION
DATE: March 3, 2026
TIME: 2:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Finance
ROOM: Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony with **COMMENTS on HB 1891 HD1**, requiring the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offering professional development on structured literacy and evidenced-based interventions, and supporting pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction.

The Commission offers comments, for the purpose of clarity, to replace “all public schools” with “all department schools.” since the bill refers specifically to the department and not public charter schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



**STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA**

PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair
House Committee on Finance
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Todd and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB1891 HD1, Relating to Education

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities is in **SUPPORT of HB1891 HD1**, which requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offer professional development on structured literacy and evidenced-based interventions, and support pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction.

Early identification and intervention are critical to improving reading outcomes. Research consistently shows that students who are not reading proficiently by third grade face long-term academic challenges. Dyslexia-sensitive universal screening, paired with structured literacy instruction and evidence-based interventions, creates a proactive system that identifies students at risk before they fall significantly behind.

Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities often experience co-occurring language, processing, or literacy challenges. When reading difficulties are not identified early, these students may struggle unnecessarily or be misidentified, delaying appropriate supports. Implementing consistent, linguistically appropriate screening tools and structured literacy instruction strengthens the multi-tiered system of supports and promotes equitable access to reading proficiency for all learners.

Professional development and pre-service training are also essential. Ensuring that both current and future educators are trained in structured literacy approaches improves instructional quality systemwide and supports inclusive classrooms where students with diverse learning needs can succeed.

HB1891 advances equity, early intervention, and evidence-based practice within Hawai'i's public education system. For these reasons, the Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **supports HB1891 HD1.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

Ka 'Oihana Ho'oka'a'ike no ka Po'e Kīnānā

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • (808) 204-2466 (VP)

March 3, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

House Bill 1891 House Draft 1 – Relating to Education

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1891 House Draft 1 – Relating to Education. This bill requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offer professional development on structured literacy and evidenced-based interventions, and support pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction. It appropriates funds and is effective 7/1/3000.

Proper diagnosis and treatment of dyslexia helps to mitigate its impact and will improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director

Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition
2444 Dole Street, Bachman Annex 6
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

March 2, 2026

House Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition strongly supports [HB 1891 HD1](#). This bill represents a positive step forward in ensuring educational equity for every student in Hawai'i.

HB 1891 addresses a critical gap in our current system by requiring dyslexia-sensitive universal screenings for students from Kindergarten through third grade. Screenings are the first line of defense in identifying students at risk for dyslexia and other developmental language disabilities. To be effective, these screenings should provide meaningful, skill-level information - not just a pass/fail score - to guide specific teacher interventions. As Hawai'i is currently the only state without dyslexia-specific legislation, this bill is essential for closing the achievement gap. It ensures that a student's struggle to read is identified early, rather than being overlooked until they have already fallen behind their peers. Furthermore, we would like to suggest an amendment to add parent notification within 30 days of a student flagged; involving families is critical to ensuring students receive holistic support in addressing learning gaps.

A key strength of HB 1891 HD1 is its focus on the lifecycle of a teacher's career. By partnering with teacher preparation programs, we ensure that new educators enter the workforce equipped with the knowledge to deliver evidence-based, structured literacy instruction. This bill ensures veteran teachers have the training needed to implement the Hawai'i Multi-Tiered System of Supports (HMTSS) with fidelity. When instruction is evidence-based and developmentally appropriate, all learners, especially those with dyslexia and other language challenges, have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

We defer to the Hawai'i State Department of Education regarding the implementation and provisions of the sections of the bill that are pertinent to the department.

The Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition is a network of education leaders who have made a collective commitment to promoting literacy throughout the state of Hawai'i. We remain dedicated to research-informed strategies that improve outcomes for all learners.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony on this bill.

The Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition *E Holomua Kākou – Let Us Move Forward Together*

Members of the Hawai'i State Literacy Coalition.

- Meilan Akaka Manfre
- Jennifer Dempsey, Ed.D.
- Sarah DeLuca
- Kim Guieb
- Serena Marsden
- Christopher Padesky, Ph.D,
- Amy Ruhaak, Ph.D
- Petra Schatz, Ph.D.
- Leslie Stiller-West
- Jill Takasaki Canfield
- Germaine Tauati
- Danielle Todd
- Tiffany Yango-Au



Chair Todd
Vice Chair Takenouchi
House Committee on Finance

Tuesday, March 3, 2026
2:00PM

HB 1891 – RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Aloha Members of the House Committee on Finance,

The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission was first created through Act 106 in 2018, “to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State.” The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission’s Education legislative committee is in **strong support** of **HB 1891**.

As students, we understand that meeting the needs of each and every student is critical to success in schools. For this, schools must have strong structural support, assessing needs early in a child’s educational career. Neurological learning disabilities such as dyslexia can impact a student’s success in schools, especially if these disabilities go unnoticed and unaddressed.

As this bill finds, a little over half of Hawaii’s students are reading proficient. To improve literacy rates in schools across the state, we must take steps to identify root causes of the issue, and provide proper support to students who need it. HB 1891 does just that, implementing dyslexia-sensitive universal screenings and taking steps for proper evidence-based intervention. By doing this, we ensure that students don’t needlessly struggle, creating stronger readers and

improving student outcomes.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State Youth Commission is in strong support of HB1891 and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission

hawaiistateyc@gmail.com



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-8126 Fax: (808) 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

March 3, 2026

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Dominique Anders
Ms. Kathie Awaya
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Mr. Will Carlson
Ms. Annette Cooper
Mr. Mark Disher
Ms. Nancy Gorman
Dr. Natalie Haggerty
Ms. Stacy Haitzuka
Ms. Mai Hall
Ms. Melissa Johnson
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Ms. Jessica McCullum
Ms. Siena Molina
Ms. Trish Moniz
Ms. Cherine Pai
Mr. Chris Pelayo
Ms. Kiele Pennington
Ms. Kau'i Rezentes
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. Scott Shimabukuro
Mr. Herbert Taitingfong
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Helen Kaniho, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Ms. Wendy Nakasone-Kalani,
*liaison to the military
community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Committee on Finance
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 1891, HD 1 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

Dear Representative Todd and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Council under the Individual's with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is in **strong support** of HB 1891, HD 1 that requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offer professional development on structured literacy and evidenced-based interventions, and support pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction

This legislation is critical in addressing the significant literacy achievement gap between students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. SEAC advises the Department of Education on the needs of roughly 20,000 students who have been found eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The largest subgroup of special education students is identified as having a specific learning disability, and according to the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, 80-90 percent of these students likely have dyslexia. In SY 2024-25, only about one in ten 3rd and 4th grade students with learning disabilities were proficient in reading on the Smarter Balance Assessment. Many students identified in other IDEA eligibility categories also have significant difficulties with literacy resulting in the largest achievement gaps in reading on the Smarter Balanced Assessment and the National Assessment of Educational Progress of any other student subgroup.

Universal & Dyslexia Screening. Dyslexia-sensitive universal screening for grades kindergarten through 3rd grade could help to identify the estimated 15-20% of the school population who have dyslexia and related reading difficulties before they begin to fall behind and provide them with targeted interventions that could mitigate the need for specially designed instruction in the future. Without



identification and individualized support, these students will fail to develop a strong foundation in literacy and become at risk of academic failure, higher rates of dropping out and incarceration, and lower future earnings.

Structured Literacy Training. Non-proficient readers who are currently in grades 4 and above will also benefit from this measure which mandates professional development statewide for all teachers to better recognize dyslexia and deliver structured literacy instruction and evidence-based interventions to address self-regulation, executive functioning, reading, writing and comprehension. While structured literacy is essential for students with dyslexia, research has shown that it is effective for all students and fits well within a multi-tiered system of supports where interventions are individualized for students who are not successful with Tier 1 instruction. Training will also include preservice in state approved teacher education programs, ensuring that future teachers will have the skills to identify students with dyslexia and address their unique learning needs.

Written parent notification. While not explicitly mentioned in HB 1891, HD 1, SEAC holds strongly that parents must be notified early when their child is at risk of reading delays and given the tools to support their child's literacy at home. We are therefore in support of the amendment offered by HawaiiKidsCAN stating that "a family must receive written notification within 30 school days if a student is determined to be at risk of language or literacy challenges. Notifications should also include the basis for the "at-risk" determination."

Dyslexia and other reading challenges when identified early and addressed with structured literacy instruction can set students on the path to a successful academic career. We urge your Committee to support this legislation that is targeting ALL struggling readers to ensure a system that is fair and consistent across the state. This investment will pay huge dividends in improving the academic success and future contributions of Hawaii's public school students.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 5:52:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 4:25:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Piikea Kalakau-Baarde	Teach for America Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representative Todd, Chair, Representative Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Pi'ikea Kalakau-Baarde, and I work at Teach for America Hawai'i. I'm a former public school teacher and now support TFA Hawai'i's local initiatives, including our corps member programming, early literacy, alumni leadership development, external affairs, and more.

I'm reaching out in support of HB1891, which requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive, linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offer professional development on structured literacy and evidence-based interventions, and support pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction.

A significant portion of my current role involves advancing a 10-year goal around early literacy that we established through research and over 400 local interviews and survey responses from educational leaders, community organizations, students, and families. Specifically, our goal is that by 2030, twice as many children in Nānākuli and Wai'anae will reach proficiency in 3rd-grade reading, indicating that they are on a path to economic mobility and co-creating a future filled with possibilities. We believe that this bill will contribute to our goal.

HB1891 represents a critical step toward ensuring that every child in Hawai'i has the foundational skills necessary for lifelong success. By mandating dyslexia-sensitive universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, this bill addresses a significant gap in our current educational system. Early identification is the most effective way to prevent reading failure, and codifying these practices ensures that students with dyslexia and other literacy challenges receive the targeted, linguistically appropriate support they deserve from the very beginning of their academic journey.

Furthermore, the bill's focus on professional development in structured literacy empowers our educators with the tools needed to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Investing in teacher training and aligning instruction with proven, research-based practices is not just an educational improvement; it is a matter of equity for our students. HB1891 provides the necessary framework and resources to move Hawai'i toward a more consistent and effective literacy

model, ultimately strengthening our entire community through higher academic achievement and improved student outcomes.

Mahalo,

Pi'ikea Kalakau-Baarde, EdD

TFA Hawai'i



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

Mar 1, 2026

MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

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The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
House Committee on Finance
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: HB1891 HD1, Relating to 911 Services.

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) supports HB1891 HD1 with recommendations.

HB1891 HD1 requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screening beginning in the 2028-2029 school year for students in kindergarten through third grade and for new students entering public schools in the State. The bill further requires evidence-based interventions within the Hawaii multi-tiered system of supports framework, professional development in structured literacy instruction, collaboration with pre-service teacher programs, and appropriate funds to support implementation.

The Legislature correctly notes that students who are not brought to reading proficiency by third grade face significantly reduced long-term educational and economic outcomes. Early identification of dyslexia and language-based learning differences is critical to preventing compounding academic barriers that may later require more intensive and costly interventions.

From a fiscal perspective, early screening and structured literacy instruction represent a preventative investment. When students with dyslexia or related literacy challenges are identified early and provided evidence-based instruction, the State may reduce future expenditures associated with remediation, grade retention, behavioral intervention, special education escalation, and long-term educational disengagement.



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Roxanne U. Bolden

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Vice Chair

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Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

Member

Scott Suzuki
Sheila Castaneda
Jennifer Hartsock

AILH respectfully offers the following recommendations to strengthen implementation:

First, sufficient and sustained funding should accompany screening and professional development requirements to ensure consistent statewide implementation. Structured literacy training must be comprehensive and ongoing to achieve meaningful impact.

Second, screening tools should remain culturally and linguistically appropriate, particularly in a state with diverse language backgrounds. Accurate identification depends on assessments that account for bilingual learners and varied linguistic exposure.

Third, implementation should include transparent reporting on screening outcomes, intervention access, and reading proficiency trends to evaluate effectiveness and inform future resource allocation.

Fourth, coordination with special education services and disability support systems should be clear to ensure that screening results translate into timely and appropriate instructional interventions.

Fifth, the Department may wish to consider collaboration with community-based organizations, including Centers for Independent Living, to provide families with additional information and navigation support following identification. While instructional services appropriately remain within the purview of the Department of Education, families often benefit from guidance regarding disability rights, self-advocacy, transition planning, and available community resources. Centers for Independent Living are federally authorized, cross-disability organizations that can serve as supplemental partners in supporting long-term student and family success.

HB1891 HD1 represents a proactive approach to literacy equity and disability inclusion. Early identification paired with structured literacy instruction strengthens educational access, long-term independence, and future workforce participation for students with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences.

AILH respectfully urges passage with the above recommendations.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Jonathan Yap

Member

Scott Suzuki
Sheila Castaneda
Jennifer Hartsock

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Roxanne Bolden
Executive Director



info@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

March 1, 2026

House Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports HB1891 HD1, which requires all public schools to administer dyslexia-sensitive universal screening to all students in kindergarten through grade three, provides professional learning opportunities in structured literacy instruction for certain public school employees, and requires a report to the legislature on the progress made by the 2031-2032 school year.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that all students in Hawaii have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels or circumstances. As a member of the Hawaii State Literacy Coalition, strengthening foundational literacy is one of HawaiiKidsCAN's priority policy areas.

In October 2024, the Department of Education received a five-year \$60 million federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant to support schools in adopting best practices in structured literacy instruction, provide teacher training, and more. In the same month, the department identified its top literacy priorities and created a goals framework called the Literacy Levers, which have been shared with all public schools. The department testified at a Board of Education hearing on February 12, 2026 that these objectives were chosen from among nationally recognized best practices for being particularly critical and appropriate for Hawaii. Together with the department's stated CLSD grant objectives, we celebrate the intent of the clear path laid out for every school in the state. We have appended a copy of the literacy levers to our testimony for reference.

While these goals and initial progress through the CLSD grant are laudable, the department testified that only 60 schools are participating in the grant. While significant, this is still a far cry from the 258 public schools in our state. Because schools



opted in to participate in the grant, we are concerned that the benefits of the training, literacy coaching, and support for improved screening will not reach the schools that chose not to participate, raising equity concerns.

Students and families should reasonably be able to expect that no matter which public school a child attends, they will successfully be taught to read and write. Literacy is a key reason public schools were created in the first place. **But if the use of effective screeners and best-practice teacher training is only “made available” and not required for two thirds of our schools, we run the risk of leaving the bulk of schools, teachers, and ultimately students, behind.** When 69% of our fourth graders are not reading proficiently, we cannot afford to take this risk.¹

The Literacy Levers and CLSD objectives paint an attractive picture of what our schools could achieve, but they do not go far enough. They allow schools to choose not to engage with the best possible practices and tools to support struggling readers. Without any built in accountability mechanisms, the picture painted by the Levers is deeply vulnerable to becoming a veneer that covers up inequities.

This is reflected in a January 2026 update on the status of literacy policy implementation in Hawaii from national thinktank ExcelinEd. A low rating several years ago inspired Hawaii’s Literacy Levers, yet the latest update found that our state rated a mere three out of 18 for policy adoption and implementation.² While the department’s progress through the CLSD grant has been meaningful, the current grant only lasts for five years and does not guarantee long-term protection or standards.

In many states, codifying a strong literacy policy has been critical for improving outcomes and equitable practice. We therefore urge the legislature to enshrine key elements of the Literacy Levers, including requiring the use of dyslexia-sensitive screeners, notifying parents in a timely manner of at-risk students, and ensuring *all* teachers are trained to teach *all* students how to read.

We would like to humbly suggest the following amendments to ensure the measure has the greatest impact possible:

1. Replacing the text of HB 1891 sections 2, 3, and 4 with the corresponding text from HB 1784 for clarity and stipulations such as considerations around English Learners, the exemption of Native Hawaiian focused schools and charter schools, and the need to differentiate instruction;



2. Section 2 subsection (c) of HB1784 would be stronger if amended to specify that a family must receive written notification within 30 days if a student is determined to be at risk of language or literacy challenges;
3. Making the teacher professional development for all listed categories of public school employees in HB1784 section 2 subsection (e) mandatory rather than available would ensure that all teachers are prepared to teach to the same high standard, eliminating gaps in instructional quality between schools;
4. Section 4's reporting requirements would be better aligned to the bill's actions if they included:
 - a. A report listing the schools that are or are not in compliance with the requirement to administer a dyslexia-sensitive screener, including whether schools are administering more than one screener to catch redundant testing;
 - b. An update on the extent to which employees listed in section 2 subsection (e) of HB1784 completed structured literacy training;
 - c. Data that can be disaggregated for each complex area and school tracking the percent of students screened with a dyslexia-sensitive screener in kindergarten through grade 3, the percent of students identified as being at risk of language or literacy struggles on said screener, and the percent of students receiving an intervention as a result of such an identification;
 - d. Amended wording of HB1784 section 4 item (4) to clarify that the purpose of planning with educator preparation programs is to ensure teacher candidates are prepared to implement structured literacy instruction; and
5. A removal of the appropriation, as materials aligned with best-practices - including the department's own structured literacy training - are available free of charge and designed to be embedded into allotted professional development hours, grade-level meetings, or waiver days, per the department's own guidance.³

Mahalo for your consideration,

Erica Nakanishi-Stanis
Advocacy Director
HawaiiKidsCAN



1. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2024 Reading Assessments. [State Snapshot Report, Hawaii Grade 4 Public Schools](#)
2. Excel in Ed - Hawaii Implementation Report, updated February 2026. <https://earlyliteracymatters.org/state/hawaii/>
3. Hawaii Department of Education - Learning Design Standards-Based Content [Sample Pacing Guide Hideoe Pk-5 Structured Literacy Program](#). Retrieved March 1, 2026.

Hawai'i State Department of Education's Literacy Levers



Science of Reading Training

Hawai'i teachers will be trained in the science of reading in order to successfully implement structured literacy instruction for all students.



Family Notification

Hawai'i families will receive written notification of students' literacy screening results; families of students at risk will be given further information on interventions provided.



Evidence-Based Interventions

Hawai'i students at risk will receive evidence-based, Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 interventions aligned to their individual literacy skill needs within the HMTSS-R system.



Literacy Coaching

Hawai'i schools will have access to highly trained literacy coaches to support teachers in the implementation of structured literacy and data-based instruction.



Universal & Dyslexia Screening

Hawai'i K-3 students will be screened for literacy difficulties with a state office approved dyslexia-sensitive screener; all 4-9 students at risk will also be screened.



High Quality Instructional Materials

Hawai'i students will have full access to engaging Tier 1 literacy instruction with evidence-informed, high quality instructional materials within the Hawai'i Multi-Tier System of Supports (HMTSS-R) system.



Monitoring Student Progress

Hawai'i students will be progress monitored for growth within the HMTSS-R system; students at risk will be closely progress monitored for reasonable Rate of Improvement (ROI).



Adequate Funding

Hawai'i schools will be adequately funded to support their students' literacy needs, with priority given to increasing access to quality instruction through literacy coaching, literacy interventionists, and universal staff development.

Source: Hawaii State Department of Education



Thirty four community members have also co-signed our testimony in support of HB 1891 HD1.



Name of Individual or Organization	Affiliation	Zip Code
Serena Marsden		96744
Dr. Chris Padesky		96815
Dr. Jennifer Dempsey		96768
Misty Cruden		96760
Elijah Kochenbach		96720
Alexander Callenback		96778
Sarah DeLuca	Bess Press	96816
Doug Imig, PhD		96822
Kara Kusunoki		96816
Jason Breslin		12110
Kim Guieb		96818
Keoni Uehara		96792
Phaedra Robinson, Ph.D.	RAI Hawaii LLC	96734
Silvia Tedeschi		96814
Brigitte Schell		96816
Jacqueline Lamontagne		96744
Sachie Yorck		96816
Kaela Teho		96813
Mindy Yang		98613
Dylan Fujitani		96822
Mary Shook-Starsinic		96826
Marissa Brooks	FIT4MOM Honolulu	96825
Kate Sowards		96826
Michelle Lam		96744
Leilani Kailiawa		96720
Anne Weber-Yarbrough		96819
Courtney Caranguian		96789
Paloma Almanza		96734
Germaine Kaleilehua Tauati, MA.ED.		96720



Jill Takasaki Canfield	Hawaii Literacy	96817
Momi Mae Ham		96816
Leilani Kailiawa		96720
Jillian Levy		96792
Jessica Barbera		96816



The following letter was voluntarily submitted by a community member who signed onto this testimony and gave permission for it to be included in full below. We are grateful for her voice and perspective.

**Testimony in Support of HB 1891
Relating to Dyslexia-Sensitive Screening and Educator Training**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Barbera, and I am writing in strong support of HB 1891 as both a parent and a literacy teacher working closely with young children in our public schools.

As a literacy educator, I see firsthand how early reading struggles can quietly compound over time when students are not identified early or accurately. Many of the students who work the hardest are often the ones who feel the most frustrated, not because they lack motivation or intelligence, but because their brains process language differently. Dyslexia does not reflect a lack of effort or ability, yet without dyslexia-sensitive screeners and proper training, these students are often misunderstood, overlooked, or identified far too late.

As a parent, this issue is deeply personal. Every child deserves to feel confident, capable, and supported in their learning. When a child struggles to read and no one can explain why, it impacts not just academics but their self-esteem, behavior, and long-term relationship with school. Early identification changes that story. It replaces confusion with clarity and frustration with targeted support.

HB 1891 is critical because it focuses on early, dyslexia-sensitive screening paired with professional learning for educators. Screening alone is not enough. Teachers must be trained to understand what the data means and how to respond instructionally. This bill recognizes that reality. When educators are equipped with the right tools and knowledge, we can intervene earlier, provide structured literacy instruction, and prevent years of academic struggle.

I have seen how effective training transforms classrooms. Teachers become more confident, students receive instruction aligned to how they learn, and families finally feel seen and heard. This bill is not about labeling children. It is about understanding them.

Supporting HB 1891 is an investment in our students, our teachers, and our families. It promotes equity, early intervention, and evidence-based literacy practices that will benefit Hawai'i's keiki for years to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to improving literacy outcomes for all students. I respectfully urge you to support HB 1891.

Thank you,
Jessica Barbera

Parent and Literacy Teacher

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:08:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Marsden	The Reading League Hawai'i	Support	In Person

Comments:

March 1, 2026

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Serena Marsden. I am testifying on behalf of The Reading League Hawai'i in strong support of HB 1891. I have been an educator in Hawai'i for 24 years, and I am the mother of two brilliant dyslexic children.

HB 1891 addresses a critical literacy gap in our state. Hawai'i is currently the only state in the nation without dyslexia-specific legislation to support students. At a time when just over half of our students are reading proficiently, we cannot afford to remain the only state without clear protections for children with Dyslexia and related language-based learning differences.

The cost of illiteracy extends far beyond academics. It is deeply connected to mental health and long-term life outcomes. When children struggle to read and are not identified early, they do not simply fall behind; they internalize failure. They experience shame, anxiety, and diminished self-worth. Many disengage from school altogether. Research consistently links early reading failure to higher dropout rates, lower lifetime earnings, and disproportionate representation in the juvenile and adult justice systems. The school-to-prison pipeline often begins with early literacy failure. In my 24 years in Hawai'i classrooms, I have witnessed this pattern again and again. It is heartbreaking. The students who left my classroom still unable to read stay with me.

And I must say this clearly: in my undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs, I was not taught how to teach students to read, especially students who struggle. When I realized the emotional weight of children leaving my classroom without literacy, I sought out and personally funded additional training to learn how to teach reading effectively. That should not be the burden of individual teachers. All new educators must be trained in the Science of Reading and evidence-aligned instruction during their preparation programs. This should be non-negotiable. It benefits every student who walks into that classroom, not just for one year, but for decades to come.

HB 1891 intervenes at the right time. The bill requires dyslexia-sensitive, linguistically appropriate universal screening in Kindergarten through third grade, precisely when intervention is most effective. It ensures students are not simply labeled "below," but that schools identify the underlying skills impacting reading development. It strengthens evidence-based interventions

within Hawai‘i’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports and requires professional development in structured literacy, aligning practice with decades of research showing that, with effective assessment and explicit instruction, the vast majority of students can learn to read. Research has repeatedly shown that with the right instruction, 95% of students can learn to read.

Equally critical is family notification. Early identification only works if families are clearly and promptly informed when a child is flagged by a dyslexia-sensitive screener. Families deserve transparency about what the screening means, what interventions will be provided, and how they can partner with schools. When families are notified early, we reduce confusion. We reduce stigma. We replace fear with clarity and partnership.

HB 1891 is not simply an education bill.
It is a mental health bill.
It is an equity bill.
It is a prevention bill.

We know what works: early identification, structured literacy instruction, and strong teacher preparation. The question before us is not whether we know how to prevent reading failure—we do. The question is whether Hawai‘i will act.

On behalf of The Reading League Hawai‘i, I respectfully urge you to pass HB 1891 and ensure that every child in our state has the opportunity to become a confident, capable reader. Mahalo for your leadership and your commitment to Hawai‘i’s literacy future.

Mahalo,
Serena Marsden
Vice President, The Reading League Hawai‘i

Impact Academy

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jonie Nagle, and I am in 4th grade.

When kids don't learn to read, the cost is higher than a test score. It can mean shame, giving up, and students getting into trouble because school never felt like a place where they could succeed. Many incarcerated adults struggled with reading as children. That is the real cost of not acting early to help struggling readers.

But we know the answer.

Early identification.

Strong support.

Evidence-aligned, structured literacy instruction.

HB 1891 helps Hawai'i choose prevention instead of consequences.

Please pass this bill so every child can learn to read and build a future full of possibilities.

Mahalo for listening to my voice,

Jonie Nagle
4th Grade

Aloha, Committee -

My name is Coco Beh. I am dyslexic. Because we found out two years ago, I'm getting lots of help at school and from my family.

I am lucky.

But I wonder what would happen to me if I wasn't lucky. If we didn't know I had dyslexia and every day at school felt too hard to handle.

I think I would leave school as soon as I could. And my problem would probably become Hawaii's problem.

Please help every dyslexic kid be the lucky one.

Vote yes on HB 1891

Mahalo,
Coco Beh
3rd Grade

HB 891

Help Kids Learn to Read

Hi my name is Evelyn and I care for people that need help in school. I am very very determined to help young readers. In some school people can't get the help they need. I know you're amazing and care so all I need is your support on this bill. I have **M**any friends and family that have special needs and they just need a little more help and that's ok, it's a SUPER POWER! But if you want to help me and all the people with special reading needs. please join our cause! ♡ Evelyn.k

HI I'm ^{Zoe} ~~Zoe~~ Avila Bermond
and I'm supporting the
bill HB 1891, did you know
that Hawaii is the only
state in America that can
help or treat kids that
have dyslexia, and also
1/5 kids have dyslexia and
won't support them.
So who wants to
help kids with dyslexia
like my friend Coco to
be come super heroes! and
remember dyslexia is a
super power! Thank you!

Mahalo,
Zoe Avila-Bermond
3rd Grade

Aloha e,

My name is Easton, and I have Dyslexia. My brain works differently. I just needed to be taught differently.

When I finally got the right instruction, reading started to make sense. I stopped feeling frustrated and started believing in myself.

HB 1891 will ensure students are screened early and that teachers are trained to help them appropriately. Please support this bill so every child in Hawai'i has a fair chance to learn to read.

Mahalo for listening,

Easton Culver &
Noah Rossato
3rd Grade Students

Aloha e Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Taegan and I am in 3rd grade.

Did you know that **1 in 5 kids has dyslexia?** That means many kids in Hawai'i learn to read in different ways.

Hawai'i is the only state in the entire country without laws to support dyslexic learners. That is not fair to students who need help.

If we don't find them early, they can feel confused and frustrated.

HB 1891 helps teachers notice students early and provide the right support.

Please help all of us become skilled and confident readers.

Mahalo, ♥

Taegan Murray
3rd Grade Student

Aloha e Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Luna, and I am a 3rd grade student in Hawai'i.

Here is the hopeful part: reading struggles are not a mystery. We already know how to teach kids to read.

Research shows that with the right instruction, 95% of students CAN learn to read.

That instruction is called structured literacy. It teaches reading step by step in a way that works with how the brain learns.

HB 1891 brings universal dyslexia screening, evidence-aligned instruction, and stronger teacher training to Hawai'i.

We know the solution. Please help us bring hope and literacy to every child in our state.

Mahalo, ♥
Luna Wilson
3rd Grade Student

Aloha e, my name is Jolie.

Reading opens doors. It helps us learn, dream, and become anything we want.

But when reading is hard, and no one understands why, kids can feel sad and alone.

HB 1891 ensures students are screened early and taught effectively.

Please support this bill so that no child feels left behind.

Mahalo.

Jolie Ingram
3rd Grade

Aloha e, my name is Vivvy

Vivvy When students can't read and don't get help, some give up. Some even drop out of school.

Reading is connected to our future. It keeps doors open.

Azuri HB 1891 helps prevent kids from falling behind for years.

Please protect Hawai'i's keiki and their futures. Please support Bill 1891.

Mahalo,

Vivvy Blanchard &
Azuri Patel
3rd Grade Students

Three students together: *Mila, Scout, Jude*,
Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

We are not statistics.
We are not test scores.
We are Hawai'i's future.

Find us early.
Support us strongly.
Teach us the right way.

Choose literacy.
Choose keiki.
Choose our future.

Please pass HB 1891.

Mahalo.

*Mila Richards
Jade Atkins &
Scout O'Brien
3rd Grade*

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Meara, and I am a student in Hawai'i with Dyslexia.

Universal screening and teacher training cost money. But the cost of illiteracy is far greater.

When students don't learn to read, they lose confidence. They feel ashamed. Some stop trying. Some stop coming to school. Research shows that struggling readers are more likely to drop out — and even become part of the school-to-prison pipeline.

That is the heartbreaking cost.

But illiteracy is not a mystery. We know how to prevent it.

Early identification.

Strong support.

Evidence-aligned reading instruction.

That is the silver bullet.

HB 1891 allows Hawai'i to choose prevention over consequences, and opportunity over limitation.

Please pass this bill so every child can learn to read — and write their own future.

Mahalo.

Meara Marsden
5th Grade student

Aloha, I'm Hope

If dyslexic students are not found early, reading can feel scary and overwhelming. Some kids stop believing in themselves.

But early screening and structured reading teaching can change everything.

HB 1891 helps schools find Dyslexia early and support students right away.

I want every dyslexic student in Hawai'i to learn to read and feel confident.

Please support HB 1891.

Mahalo,

Hope Harris
3rd Grade Student

February 19, 2026

Chair, Yamashita, Vice Chair, Takenouchi and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 1891. This measure funds two fiscally responsible steps: universal kindergarten screening for dyslexia and teacher training to support students with dyslexia. It allows Hawai'i to avoid a never-ending cycle of escalating remediation costs and helps plug an immediate revenue leak.

When children with dyslexia aren't identified early, remediation costs multiply — special education services, tutoring, behavioral interventions, grade retention, and alternative placements. And when they leave school they are more likely to be incarcerated, live in poverty and suffer ongoing health issues. Early screening and trained teachers reduce long-term expenditures.

There's also an immediate and urgent revenue issue. Every day, families are making financial decisions based on whether their children's literacy needs are being met. When parents of dyslexic keiki leave the public system for private schools or homeschooling, the funding leaves with them. Public schools can't afford ongoing enrollment loss.

This bill is about naming a problem early so we can address it effectively. Dyslexia affects a staggering 20% of the population so I'm guessing there are people on this committee personally touched by this issue. Mahalo for your good stewardship of taxpayer dollars and your deep concern for the well-being of all Hawaii's keiki.

Lauren Farasati

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:35:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Shikuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

As a Fellow with the Orton-Gillingham Academy (OGA) in Structured Literacy, with a Master’s degree in Education, and as the mother of two children with dyslexia, I strongly support this bill requiring dyslexia-sensitive, linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions within the Hawai‘i Department of Education.

Hawaii is one of only a very small number of states in the nation that does **not** currently have any systematic early screening for dyslexia. Research consistently shows that the earlier students who are at risk for dyslexia are identified and provided with effective, structured literacy interventions, the better their academic outcomes and long-term reading success.

Early intervention not only improves reading and writing skills, but it also helps prevent the emotional, social, and academic consequences of years of struggle and reduces unnecessary long-term dependence on special education services.

This bill’s requirement for universal screening, professional development in structured literacy, and strengthened teacher preparation reflects best practices supported by decades of science. By appropriating funds to implement these evidence-based approaches, Hawai‘i will join the national movement toward early identification and support, giving all students the chance to read, learn, and thrive.

Thank you,

Lori Shikuma

M.S.Ed., Fellow/Orton Gillingham Academy, Structured Literacy Dyslexia Specialist/IDA

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 6:07:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anriada Nassif, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a board-certified pediatrician practicing in Oahu. I am writing in strong support of HB1891.

In pediatrics, early identification is foundational. We screen newborns for metabolic disorders, infants for hearing loss, toddlers for autism, and children for vision and developmental delays. We do this because early detection allows for early intervention, and early intervention improves outcomes.

Reading is a critical developmental milestone. Dyslexia is common, affecting an estimated 20% of the population. When reading difficulties are not identified early, children often experience years of academic struggle, declining confidence, behavioral concerns, and secondary mental health effects such as anxiety and low self-esteem.

Research consistently shows that evidence-based reading intervention is most effective when provided in kindergarten through second grade. By third grade, reading shifts from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” If children are not identified before this transition, the academic gap can widen significantly.

In my clinical practice, I frequently see children who fall behind and give up on academics, only because they were not identified early. Parents do not know where to turn as the system is very hard to navigate, especially if you do not have the means to pay out of pocket. A universal, structured screening process would create a more equitable system that does not rely solely on parent advocacy or teacher suspicion.

HB1891 represents a proactive, prevention-focused approach aligned with pediatric best practices and developmental science. Our keiki deserve early identification, timely intervention, and the opportunity to build strong literacy foundations.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to Hawai‘i’s children.

Mahalo for considering.

Anriada Nassif, MD

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 7:21:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melinda Santhany	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of this Bill!

Mahalo,

Dr. Melinda Santhany.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:04:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Clark, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 1891. Dyslexia can be a life altering learning disability if left unrecognized. However, if detected early in a child's life and appropriate support is given to that child, it is an obstacle that can be overcome. It is imperative that it is diagnosed early so every child can have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:22:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Bill HB1891 is critically needed because just over half of Hawaii’s students are reading proficiently. As described within this Bill, in order to improve student reading proficiency, it is necessary to address the root causes that contribute to the present levels of poor reading proficiency rates. A proactive and systematic approach is required to achieve high literacy rates for all students. This bill addresses this need and would require the department of education to screen and provide interventions when necessary in order to improve literacy rates in our State.

As the bill outlines, presently, the department of education is striving to address poor reading proficiency rates by administering a universal screener at the beginning, middle, and end of the year for all students from kindergarten to grade nine. The purpose of this universal screening is to identify students who may be at risk for reading failure, and to provide evidence-based interventions to support these students, in addition to core-structured literacy instruction. However, not all universal screeners are able to detect or identify students who may have certain underlying language challenges that impact learning such as dyslexia. This is problematic because students with dyslexia or other developmental language disorders may need more intensive support or a more individualized intervention program to address the causes of their reading challenges. Unfortunately, Hawaii is the only state in the country that lacks dyslexia-specific laws to support students in this area.

I support this bill because it supports increasing reading proficiency in Hawaii by addressing the need for more intensive intervention programs that address the causes of reading challenges.

Thank you for supporting increasing the reading proficiency levels of Hawaii's students and helping to ensure a successful future for all students.

February 27, 2026

Honorable Representative Chris Todd,
Chair, House Committee on Finance

Honorable Representative Jenna Takenouchi,
Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

Regarding: **Support for HB1891 Relating to Education**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony in strong support of HB1891, which requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia-sensitive universal screenings, literacy, and evidence-based interventions, and support programs to train teachers in structured literacy instruction.

Aloha mai kākou, I am a Chaminade University of Honolulu student, and I would like to express my support for this bill. I have double majors in English and Integrated Marketing Communication, and minors in Education and Hawaiian & Pacific Studies. I would like to show support for dyslexia aid in Hawai'i because I've seen the impact it has had on those around me.

I've been an 'academic' since childhood and have always done well in school. I credit a large part of that to my reading skills. I always had high reading scores, and I became skilled in reading comprehension, which was critical to all other aspects of my education. I also learned how to write well and to articulate my words.

How could I understand assignments and textbooks if I couldn't read? How could I be on the same grounds as my peers if they are learning things faster? How can I do assignments if I can't understand instructions, let alone write and express my answers?

Being able to read and write is a crucial skill that goes beyond English classes and education; it's an integral part of our daily lives in society. There must be screening so those with dyslexia can receive the aid needed, because they deserve the same opportunities as you and I.

I never knew much about dyslexia until my mom told me that my younger brother had it. With my education minor, I have taken several education classes where I have learned more about dyslexia and how important it is for children to get the support they

need in those early formative years. I have learned about the many struggles people have faced because they were never given proper support, if any at all.

My brother has been diagnosed with dyslexia for years. I recently asked him about his experience when I went home, if he had an idea of what form of dyslexia he has. Is it challenging to associate the sounds with the letters, or to recognize words and spelling, or are the letters foggy or moving? He looked at me oddly and said he didn't understand what I was talking about.

I was shocked, to say the least, that my brother, someone who has had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for years, seems to have no understanding of his dyslexia. I continued to ask him more specifically about his IEP, and I was concerned by what I heard. He has never received any reading or writing aid.

Many people who I have met with dyslexia have "just figured it out" because they never received the aid they needed. Whether because diagnoses and the word "dyslexia" were avoided by the schools, or, like my brother, the aids in place aren't sufficient.

Nothing can be done without finances. Without dedicated funding, schools may struggle to prioritize dyslexia screening and structured literacy supports. Programs may not be able to provide adequate aid due to a lack of funding. Literacy aid is crucial to these students' success and ability to be on par with their peers.

With the appropriate funding and financial support, schools can ensure all students who require these services are screened and that the services themselves are improved to give the best aid possible.

In closing, I strongly support this bill in screening, interventions, and educating teachers on structured literacy intervention. Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts on this bill, and I hope that we can build a better future for our keiki.

Mahalo nui loa,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Momi Mac Han". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:03:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeremiah Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a high school teacher for almost 20 years, I have seen students who struggle with dyslexia and I've been frustrated by the lack of effective interventions for these students. For this reason, I would also like to see dyslexia screeners made available at the high school level.

I urge the committee to pass this bill.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:51:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Braun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1891 HD1 (literacy), which requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offer professional development on structured literacy and evidenced-based interventions, and support pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction. Appropriates funds.

I am a long-time educator in the Hawai'i State system, testifying as an individual.

In my line of work, I know that many students are struggling to read without getting the help they need. Students and families should reasonably be able to expect that no matter which public school a child attends, they will successfully be taught to read and write. Literacy is a key reason public schools were created in the first place. But if the use of effective screeners and best-practice teacher training is only "made available" and not required for two thirds of our schools, we run the risk of leaving the bulk of schools, teachers, and ultimately students, behind.

It is critical for the legislature to codify best practices, including requiring the use of dyslexia-sensitive screeners, notifying parents in a timely manner of at-risk students, and ensuring all teachers are trained to teach all students how to read.

Mahalo - Kathryn Braun, Punchbowl

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:35:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wen Yu Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Here is a more data-driven version that maintains a professional, physician voice:

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for HB 1891 – Dyslexia Screening and Teacher Training

Aloha Chair and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Wen Yu Lee and I am a physician serving children and families in Hawai‘i. I write in strong support of HB 1891, which would establish universal Kindergarten dyslexia screening and provide teacher training in evidence-based literacy instruction.

Dyslexia is a neurobiological learning difference that affects an estimated 15–20% of the population. It is the most common cause of reading difficulty and is not related to intelligence, motivation, or socioeconomic status. Research consistently demonstrates that early identification and structured literacy intervention—particularly in Kindergarten through 2nd grade—can significantly improve reading outcomes and reduce the need for intensive remediation later.

The consequences of delayed identification are measurable. Studies show that children who are not reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma. Literacy is strongly correlated with long-term health outcomes, employment stability, and lifetime earnings. Early reading failure is also associated with increased rates of anxiety, depression, behavioral disorders, and school avoidance—conditions I regularly treat in clinical practice.

From a neurodevelopmental standpoint, early intervention matters. Brain imaging studies demonstrate that evidence-based structured literacy approaches can normalize neural reading pathways when implemented early. The longer intervention is delayed, the more intensive and costly remediation becomes.

Teacher preparation is equally critical. The majority of teacher training programs historically have not required coursework in the science of reading or dyslexia-specific instruction. Providing educators with training in structured literacy methods benefits not only students with dyslexia, but all early readers, particularly those at risk for reading failure.

The financial implications are also clear. Early screening and targeted intervention are significantly less costly than prolonged special education services, academic retention, or mental health treatment that may arise from years of academic struggle. Prevention is fiscally responsible policy.

Hawai'i remains the only state in the nation without statutory provisions addressing dyslexia identification and support. HB 1891 would align Hawai'i with national best practices and ensure equitable access to early screening and evidence-based instruction for our keiki.

Literacy is a foundational determinant of educational attainment, mental health, and long-term socioeconomic stability. As a physician, I view early literacy screening not only as an educational priority, but as a public health imperative.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB 1891.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to Hawai'i's children.

Sincerely,

Wen Yu Lee, MBA, MD

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:59:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
chelsea pang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support increasing equitable education for all students including those with dyslexia.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:24:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

****WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1891- Protect Early Screening and Teacher Training for Keiki with Dyslexia****

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly SUPPORT HB 1891 — a critical bill that would require dyslexia screening in Kindergarten and teacher training to support dyslexic learners.

Dyslexia is a neurologically based learning disability that affects approximately 15–20% of the population and is recognized as a disability under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA). When dyslexia substantially limits major life activities such as reading and learning, schools are legally obligated to provide appropriate screening and instruction.

However, Hawai‘i remains the only state in the nation with NO statutory requirement to identify and support dyslexic learners. This absence is NOT neutral. It creates systemic barriers to equal access — denying keiki with a recognized disability the full protections and accommodations to which they are entitled.

This Is a Disability Discrimination Issue

By failing to proactively screen and train educators, our public education system:

- Withholds early identification of a known disability,
- Denies evidence-based instruction that has been scientifically proven to help,
- Exposes schools and districts to legal risk for not meeting federal ADA and IDEA obligations, and
- Results in unequal educational access for students with dyslexia.

Financial Impact of NOT Diagnosing and Treating Dyslexia Early

The consequences aren’t just academic or emotional — they are financially staggering for families, schools, and our society.

1. Higher Cost of Remediation vs. Early Intervention

According to research from the [Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity](#):

- Early structured literacy intervention costs \approx \$500–\$2,500 per student per year
- Remediation later in school can exceed \$8,000–\$12,000+ per student per year

This is a 4–10 \times difference in cost. Delaying identification and support dramatically increases expenses for school districts.

2. Special Education and Retention Costs

Students with undiagnosed dyslexia are:

- More likely to be referred to special education,
- More likely to be retained in grade.

The [National Center for Education Statistics](#) reports that special education services cost approximately twice as much as general education on average. Grade retention alone can cost an additional \$10,000–\$15,000 per year per student — costs that fall on districts and taxpayers.

3. Economic Cost of Low Literacy

Children who fail to read proficiently by 3rd grade are 4 \times more likely to drop out of high school, according to the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#). High school dropouts:

- Earn hundreds of thousands of dollars less over their lifetimes,
- Pay considerably less in taxes,
- Are more likely to rely on public assistance.

Lost productivity and tax revenue cost local and state economies billions.

4. Mental Health and Healthcare Costs

Children with undiagnosed dyslexia have higher rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral challenges. The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) confirms the link between learning disorders and increased mental health needs — resulting in:

- More therapy and medical costs,
- Greater family financial stress,
- Higher public health expenditures.

5. Juvenile Justice and Incarceration Costs

Studies show that 40–60% of incarcerated individuals have significant reading difficulties, including dyslexia. Per the [U.S. Department of Justice](#), the average annual cost to incarcerate one individual exceeds \$30,000 — costs borne by taxpayers.

Preventing academic failure through early literacy support is one of the strongest protective factors against later justice involvement.

Return on Investment;

- ❖ Every \$1 invested in early reading intervention saves \$4–\$7 in later remediation and social costs.
- ❖ Screening costs are small; the potential lifetime savings — to families, schools, and taxpayers — are enormous.

By investing in Kindergarten dyslexia screening and teacher training, Hawai‘i:

- ✓ Reduces long-term public expenditures
- ✓ Improves student outcomes and lifetime earning potential
- ✓ Ensures compliance with federal disability law
- ✓ Upholds equity and civil rights for all learners

Conclusion:

HB 1891 is not merely a classroom policy — it is a civil rights, disability access, and fiscal responsibility measure.

Hawai‘i can no longer afford to be the only state without protections for students with dyslexia. The financial, emotional, and legal costs of inaction are too high.

I respectfully urge you to PASS HB 1891.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration.

William Lee

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:34:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Luck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The He'e Coalition supports HB 1891. Universal screening for dyslexia will improve reading outcomes and provide early intervention for those in need, thus reducing resources spent on remedial education. We applaud the implementation of *systematic*, structured, and evidence-based *progress monitoring*, interventions and professional development.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:11:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Marsden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rob Marsden, and I am an educational leader serving elementary students and teachers in Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB1891.

This bill represents an important and necessary step toward ensuring that all students in Hawai‘i receive early, research-aligned reading instruction and support. Universal screening in the early grades, paired with structured literacy interventions delivered through a multi-tiered system of support, reflects what decades of cognitive science and classroom experience tell us: early identification and explicit, systematic instruction matter.

I also offer my support from a personal place. I am dyslexic. As a student, I experienced firsthand the confusion and frustration that can come when reading instruction does not match how your brain learns. What changed my trajectory was explicit, structured teaching that made language patterns visible and learnable. Early access to that kind of instruction should not depend on chance. It should be built into our system.

HB1891 moves us toward that reality by ensuring:

- Early and linguistically appropriate screening for all students
- Evidence-based, structured literacy interventions for those who need them
- Professional development to strengthen teacher knowledge and practice
- Alignment with teacher preparation programs to sustain this work long term

This is not about narrowing instruction. It is about strengthening the foundation so that all students, including multilingual learners and students with learning differences, can access grade-level content with confidence. When we invest in structured literacy, we are investing in equity, agency, and long-term academic success.

As an educational leader, I see the difference strong foundational literacy makes in every content area. As a dyslexic adult, I know the difference it makes in a life.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your commitment to Hawai‘i’s keiki.

Rob Marsden

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:18:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carley Stone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and thank you to the members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Carley Stone, and I write today in support of HB1891. I serve my community on Maui as a speech language pathologist (SLP), supporting the language and literacy development of young children. There is currently a critical gap in services for our keiki who need additional support developing reading skills due to dyslexia. Right now, students on Maui may be identified as having difficulties in reading, but there are no professionals within the public education system who are trained to meet their unique needs, leaving families to search elsewhere for support, often paying for services out of their own pocket.

Dyslexia is an underlying weakness in an individual’s ability to process and manipulate the sounds that make up words, and understand those sounds as they are represented in written language. Children with dyslexia have challenges breaking down the letters and sounds in a written word, making it difficult for them to read efficiently, and read for comprehension. These students have needs that cannot adequately be met by a typical classroom reading curriculum, and our state’s educators need specialized training to meet the needs of these students. Providing training in structured literacy instruction for all educators can empower teachers to support students with dyslexia through Hawaii’s multi-tiered systems of support, as opposed to more resource-intensive interventions like special education services.

For a student with dyslexia, educators who are trained to teach to their disability can mean the difference between frustration and confidence, between feeling like a failure and feeling confident in their own ability to learn. There is an extensive evidence base supporting practices for the identification of dyslexia, and effective interventions. To ignore that evidence is to abandon our state’s students to a “good enough” education that does not adequately meet their needs.

I strongly urge the Committee to support HB1891.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Carley Stone, MA CCC-SLP

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:28:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hazel Beh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Hazel Beh, Professor Emerita, Wm. S. Richardson School of Law. I write in strong support of HB 1891, as a proud grandmother of a dyslexic child. Supporting early detection and early interventions for dyslexia is good for Hawaii's keiki and for our state. Early detection is vital to ensuring that these children succeed. We can ameliorate the lifelong hardships and the negative impacts neglecting these children can have for them; for their families; and for our state. Early detection pays big dividends in the long run.

Thank you.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:41:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Judy Vincent, MD	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Testimony in Support HB1891- Protect Early Screening and Teacher Training for Keiki with Dyslexia

To: Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee

From: Judy M. Vincent, MD, pediatrician for 46 years.

Subject: Support for Mandatory Dyslexia Screening in Kindergarten and First Grade

Date: March 3, 2026

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB1891, which would require universal dyslexia screening for all kindergarten and first-grade students in Hawaii’s public schools. Hawaii is currently the only state without such a requirement, leaving too many keiki undiagnosed during the critical early years of learning to read. This gap in early detection has lasting consequences for our keiki, their families, and our education system.

Dyslexia affects as many as one in five children and can significantly hinder a student’s academic progress, confidence, and long-term success when it goes unrecognized. Decades of research show that early identification—followed by targeted intervention—can dramatically improve reading ability and academic performance. Without early screening, keiki often struggle unnecessarily, leading to frustration, behavioral issues, and reduced educational attainment.

By implementing mandatory dyslexia screening, Hawaii would align with best practices nationally and affirm its commitment to equitable education. Early identification ensures that keiki receive timely support, teachers gain the necessary tools to respond effectively, and our school system reduces the need for costly remediation later. I respectfully urge the Legislature to pass this critical measure so every child in Hawaii has the opportunity to thrive as a confident, capable learner.

I respectfully urge you to PASS HB 1891.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration, and mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judy M. Vincent, MD

Pediatrician

Member of the American Academy of Pediatrics

154 Pauahilani Pl.

Kailua, HI 96734

808-741-0671

judymvincent@yahoo.com

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:50:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah DeLuca	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill for several reasons. As a Kindergarten/1st grade teacher with 19 years of classroom experience, one of the major joys of my career was supporting children in the process of learning to read. As we know, the ability to read opens up doors and pathways for children, and leads to future confidence and success in school, and in life. In the process of supporting children in their early literacy learning, I also worked with several children with reading disabilities, and saw firsthand the immense struggle they faced compared with their peers. Fortunate enough to be trained in systematic, structured literacy programs such as Slingerland and IMSE, I had the tools and knowledge to support these students (this training, which I can honestly say benefits ALL children), in learning to read. But more than that, early interventions, such as screening and testing, helped these students get the support they needed, earlier rather than later, which we know is crucial to their success and confidence. I fully support HB1891 HD1 and hope that it will lead to greater equity in Hawai'i's public schools, identifying students who need targeted literacy interventions at a young age. Mahalo, Sarah

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:55:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Jackie Keefe, and I am **in support HB1891 HD1**, which requires the Department of Education to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offer professional development on structured literacy and evidenced-based interventions, and support pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction.

Early identification and intervention are critical to improving reading outcomes. Universal screening paired with structured literacy helps identify students at risk before they fall behind, which is especially important for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who may experience co-occurring language or processing challenges.

Without early identification, these students may be misidentified or receive delayed supports. Professional development and pre-service training in structured literacy are essential to improving instructional quality systemwide and supporting inclusive classrooms where students with diverse learning needs can succeed.

HB1891 strengthens early intervention, educator capacity, and equitable access to literacy for all learners across Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: March 1, 2026

RE: House Bill 1891 HD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO EDUCATION.
Report Title: Department of Education; Dyslexia Screening; Universal Screening;
Evidence-based Interventions; Teacher Professional Development;
Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 1891 HD1. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:06:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Zimdahl	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mr. Chair and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Noelle Zimdahl, and I am a parent leader in my community. Most importantly, I am a mother to a child with a learning disability in reading, one that many people and states know as dyslexia, and I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 1891.

My child attends school in Hawaii, the only state where the Department of Education fails to define dyslexia and, as a result, frequently undermines her learning needs and robs her of basic human dignity, true acceptance. The Hawaii DOE needs to appropriately define dyslexia to improve access to learning, properly assess, and, most of all, build self-confidence in our dyslexic student population.

Currently, just over half of Hawai'i's students are considered proficient in reading. Indicator 17 on the [2023 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report](#) highlights that only 11.82% of the 3rd & 4th-grade students with disabilities were proficient on the Smarter Balanced Assessment-ELA Literacy. These two data points highlight the need to revise the Hawaii DOE dyslexia screening process and to consistently use evidence-based, structured literacy instruction to benefit all students at all schools, public and charter.

Our most vulnerable student learners are the most successful when parents/families can review assessment results in a timely and equitable manner. The Smarter Balanced Assessment, as a tool for tracking student progress, fails to engage parents in their students' learning because students take it in the spring, and results are not available until the summer or even the following school year. The SBA results are no longer valid by the time a parent can review them with the school team to develop remediation plans, which is imperative for students with disabilities. Replacing the SBA with a learning growth test, such as NWEA MAP testing, would mitigate this issue. Schools and parents can see results that correlate to the Common Core learning standards. The NWEA MAP testing also compares students' results to their previous scores to show how much they have grown toward their learning goals. Comparing students to themselves rather than to a national average is a more equitable way to assess students with disabilities.

My daughter had the privilege of attending a school that used a structured literacy program from 1st to 3rd grade. A move across the Island prompted a school change, and we were devastated to learn that the program that worked so well for her was not used state-wide. Our confident child, who had worked so hard and was seeing growth, was replaced with a child who cowered at the

idea of school, especially reading; her learning gap was the only thing that grew that year. It took several years for her to regain her confidence in reading and writing and to start closing her learning gap again.

It doesn't have to be this way; the beauty of life is change. Passing HB1891 would give all students, especially our most vulnerable, access to the education my daughter received during those first couple of years of school. If the goal is to make Hawai'i the best place in the world to raise a child, I implore you to support structured literacy and HB1891.

Thank you for your time. Mahalo.

-Noelle Zimdahl, mother & advocate

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:12:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

I am strong support of this bill. My son is a student in the public education and has a current Individualized Education Program (IEP). He has multiple disabilities which includes dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and few more. This would greatly benefit my son.

I urge you to please pass this bill HB 1891.

Mahalo nui loa for allowing me to share in support of this bill.

With gratitude

Leilani Kailiawa

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:06:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Masutani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1891 HD1. Students need more support to learn how to read at grade-level. Requiring the use of dyslexia-sensitive screeners, notifying parents in a timely manner of at-risk students, and ensuring all teachers are trained to teach all students how to read at all public schools can help our students and schools be more successful.

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:51:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meera Garud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in **strong support for HB1891**, which would require the Department of Education to implement dyslexia screenings and evidenced-based interventions.

Early identification and intervention are a smart investment. More students will receive evidence-based support so they can develop strong literacy skills. Strengthening teacher preparation will also pay off, resulting in more teachers able to support their students. Mahalo for considering this bill.

Testimony in Support HB1891- Protect Early Screening and Teacher Training for Keiki with Dyslexia

To: Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee

From: Dale S. Vincent, MD, MPH, FACP

Subject: Support for Mandatory Dyslexia Screening in Kindergarten and First Grade

Date: March 3, 2026

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support of HB1891. My name is Dale S. Vincent, MD and I am a retired physician with 46 years of experience, and past Chairman of the Lanikai School Board. I have three sons who attended public school in Hawaii. Two of my sons had learning disabilities, which required IEPs through the Hawaii DOE. Scientific research and the experience of 49 other states support dyslexia screening in Kindergarten and First Grade.

Research shows that dyslexia is a brain-based condition that often runs in families. It is not caused by laziness or poor teaching. Scientists can spot early warning signs before children fall far behind. These signs include trouble hearing sounds in words, slow naming of letters or objects, and weak letter knowledge. By first and second grade, reading gaps are already clear and often last for years if nothing is done. Waiting for a child to fail before helping them is not fair—and it is not necessary.

Research also shows that early help works. When children at risk receive clear, step-by-step reading instruction in kindergarten or first grade, most learn to read well. Only a small number continue to struggle when help starts early. If we wait until third grade, it takes more time and effort to close the gap, and results are weaker. Studies show that early reading programs lead to real gains in reading skills.

In states like [Mississippi](#), early literacy policies including screening, parent notification, and intervention have been part of a broader effort that helped the state improve its reading performance on national tests. Mississippi went from ranking near the bottom in fourth-grade reading to much higher on the National Assessment of Educational Progress over the last decade, and recent data show the state's fourth-grade reading scores now exceed the national average while still working to improve eighth-grade outcomes as well.

Hawai'i can choose to act early instead of reacting late. Early screening costs less than years of remediation and special education. It supports fairness by making sure all children are checked, not just those whose parents know how to ask for help. HB1891 is a

smart, research-based step that puts children first. Our keiki deserve support before they feel defeated. I respectfully urge you to pass HB1891.

Sincerely,

Dale S. Vincent, MD, MPH, FACP
154 Pauahilani Place
Kailua, HI 96734

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:06:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy M. Koerte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joy Koerte, and I am a lifelong resident of Kauai, Hawaii and mother of a 12-year-old with dyslexia. I am writing in support of HB1891.

My daughter began showing signs of struggling with reading, writing, and processing in the first grade at her DOE school. Over the next few grade levels, her challenges continued. My husband and I reached out to her teachers, her school, and private tutors for help. After a few years of in-school assessments, inconclusive findings, and several private referrals, she was finally able to be properly assessed and evaluated by a private specialist. This resulted in a dyslexia diagnosis in the months before she entered the 5th grade. This was a relief, yet we had to pay over \$2000, out of pocket, and continue to pay for her ongoing therapy, also out of pocket. While dyslexia is a common term, I realized that our family and many in the school system did not fully understand what it is, how it impacts an individual, and how to address it.

To that end, I believe that HB1891 will greatly benefit students and families in Hawaii. The bill clearly defines dyslexia as a neurobiological learning disability and requires the DOE to implement dyslexia sensitive linguistically appropriate universal screenings and evidence-based interventions, offer professional development on structured literacy and evidenced-based interventions, and support pre-teacher programs in training candidates in structured literacy instruction.

I am self-employed, and my husband works for our family's business. We are fortunate to have the flexible schedules, disposable income, and other resources to help our child get a diagnosis and continue with educational therapy. Even with these advantages, it's been a struggle to help them do well in school and extra-curricular activities, as well as maintain a healthy self-esteem. Hawaii families need these assessments and services to be competently and comprehensively provided by the DOE. The Child Mind Institute states that 1 in 5 children has dyslexia, and Hawaii families need these services for our keiki to thrive.

I strongly urge you to pass HB1891. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Joy M. Koerte

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:55:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lawrence Thomas	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

My name is L. Dean Thomas, I live in Kaneohe, HI. I support HB1891, as I was a recipient of intervention services as a young student. I was identified early on as someone that needed help with reading. This allowed for my success in school and right into the military as an aviator in the Air Force. I struggled through school but the intervention and specialized attention that I received as a young child helped to insure that I could graduate and have a very successful career in the service. Hawai'i should have the same legislation in place that provides the same services that I received.

Very Respectfully,

L. Dean Thomas

HB-1891-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:03:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Kathy Thomas and I am a resident of Kaneohe. I am a retired educator with twenty four years as a classroom teacher. I am writing in support of HB1891. This legislation will help better support students who have literacy challenges. Early screening will ensure that they get the resources they need. Dyslexic students are often among the brightest learners. Hawaii's educators are dedicated to helping students reach their full potential and this legislation will support learners, educators and their families.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kathy Thomas