



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'aina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

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

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

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 2019, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING
Committee: FIN
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: Conference Room 308

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in support of H.B. No. 2019, H.D. 1 which appropriates funds for contracts with third-party providers of Family Child Interaction Learning programs (FCILs).

This measure aligns with the Early Learning Board's current framework of policy priorities, which is grounded in the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan. Specifically, the bill advances State Plan Building Block 5: Access to Early Care and Learning Opportunities by increasing state funding for Family Child Interaction Learning Programs which promote early development through culturally responsive, 'ohana-centered support.

FCILs are an important component of Hawai'i's mixed-delivery early learning system, offering families flexibility to choose the early childhood development and learning experiences that best meet their needs. FCILs promote children's well-being by supporting parents and caregivers in their role as their children's first and most important teachers and by strengthening family capacity through guided activities and shared learning opportunities. FCILs are characterized by the following:

- Multi-generational, culturally responsive approach
- Dual focus on parent education and early learning
- Setting looks a lot like a child care classroom, but with the key difference that families are responsible for their own children while attending the program

- Activities can include group circle time, outdoor play, and a variety of learning stations
- Family members also receive instruction on child development, workforce readiness, financial literacy, and other wrap-around supports

These programs are especially valuable for families who may not be interested in or able to participate in center-based child care or preschool settings. FCILs also help address gaps in the early learning ecosystem by serving infants and toddlers, an age group for which formal early care and learning opportunities are often limited, ensuring younger children and their families have access to developmentally appropriate support.

Hawai'i's largest FCIL providers rely heavily on Federal Native Hawaiian Education Program grants, but the stability of this funding is uncertain. Increasing state support would help diversify funding sources and protect these programs from potential federal disruptions. EOEL currently allocates \$800,000 annually for FCIL contracts and supports expanding state funding to sustain and strengthen these services.

We appreciate the Legislature's ongoing investment and shared commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's early learning system for our youngest keiki and their 'ohana. Thank you for the opportunity to share these comments in support of H.B. No. 2019, H.D. 1.

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

222 NORTH SCHOOL STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817
PHONE: (808) 768-7762 • FAX: (808) 768-7792 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov/dcs

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



ANTON C. KRUCKY
DIRECTOR
PO'O

AEDWARD LOS BANOS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

TESTIMONY OF ANTON C. KRUCKY
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 02:00 PM
Conference RM 308 and Via Videoconference

TO: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair, Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Finance

RE: SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2019

The Department of Community Services (DCS), City and County of Honolulu (City), **supports** House Bill 2019, which would sustain family-child interaction learning programs across the State.

Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality, family-centered early learning experiences contribute to improved social, educational, and health outcomes for children. By supporting programs that emphasize family-child interaction, this bill aligns with best practices in early childhood development and addresses the needs of families who may otherwise lack access to such resources.

The City previously hosted federally-funded family-child interaction learning programs at two Family Assessment Centers (FACs), providing families experiencing residential instability with access to early learning opportunities alongside housing support. These programs delivered comprehensive, wraparound services designed to strengthen the entire family unit.

The City would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the State by offering all of the City's FAC sites as potential locations for future family-child interaction learning programs, leveraging existing infrastructure to expand access for families in need.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
Early Learning Board
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 1, 2026

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

From: Elaine Yamashita, Chair
Early Learning Board

Re: HB2019 HD1 support
March 3, 2026 Hearing

Aloha Honorable Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Finance Committee:

The Early Learning Board (ELB) formulates statewide policy relating to early learning, as well as directing the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL).

ELB supports HB 2019, which would allocate funds for EOEL to administer family-child interaction learning (FCIL) programs. As the bill notes, the cuts in federal funding have affected these programs severely.

In addition to the reasons cited in the bill introduction, an ELB board member pointed out that FCIL programs often serve as a way for people to enter the early childhood education profession. Those exposed to early childhood learning through a FCIL, whether as a parent or staff, may find that this is an extremely worthwhile way to invest their time and energy. We are constantly looking for ways to recruit and retain competent people for this crucially important profession.

Mahalo for your consideration and support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Elaine Yamashita
Early Learning Board Chair
elb@eoel.hawaii.gov



Date: March 3, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Commit to Keiki

Re: House Bill 2019 HD1, Relating to an Early Learning

Commit to Keiki is a statewide, non-partisan, public-private collaborative to ensure a brighter start for Hawai'i's youngest keiki. Led by a diverse Steering Committee, Commit to Keiki's mission is to increase Hawai'i's investments in its youngest keiki by collaborating with elected officials and serving as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to early childhood.

Commit to Keiki strongly supports House Bill 2019 HD1, which would provide funding to sustain family-child interaction learning (FCIL) programs around the state.

FCIL programs are a critical piece of our state's overall early learning landscape and have a proven track record of providing local children and their families with highly engaging learning environments that are literacy-rich, support a child's social and emotional development, strengthen parent/caregiver skills, and improve school readiness. These programs are efficient, impactful, and in high demand.

Utilizing a multi-generational, culturally responsive approach, FCIL programs have consistently performed well for all students--especially so in working-class communities in which parents often rely on extended family to assist in childcare. This is noteworthy in our statewide community as a sizeable portion of parents do not—or cannot—utilize center-based childcare options.

These programs have historically relied upon federal funding provided through the Native Hawaiian Education Program to operate, establishing dozens of sites around the state. However, the current federal administration has signaled its willingness to cut this funding completely, putting more than 95% of FCIL programs in Hawai'i at risk of closure.

We feel strongly that FCIL programs are an important component of the early learning landscape here in Hawai'i, and we should do all that we can to sustain them.

For this reason, Commit to Keiki strongly supports House Bill 2019 HD1.

Our Mission

Increase Hawai'i's investments in its youngest keiki by collaborating with elected officials and serving as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to Hawai'i's youngest keiki and families.



Contact Info

700 Bishop Street, Suite 1701
Honolulu, Hawai'i 93813
info@committokeiki.org
committokeiki.org

Date: March 3, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: House Bill 2019 HD1, Relating to Early Learning

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

ECAS strongly supports House Bill 2019 HD1, which would provide funding to sustain family-child interaction learning (FCIL) programs around the state.

FCIL programs are a critical piece of our state's overall early learning landscape and have a proven track record of providing local children and their families with highly engaging learning environments that are literacy-rich, support a child's social and emotional development, strengthen parent/caregiver skills, and improve school readiness. These programs are efficient, impactful, and in high demand.

Utilizing a multi-generational, culturally responsive approach, FCIL programs have consistently performed well for all students--especially so in working-class communities in which parents often rely on extended family to assist in childcare. This is noteworthy in our statewide community as a sizeable portion of parents do not—or cannot—utilize center-based childcare options.

These programs have historically relied upon federal funding provided through the Native Hawaiian Education Program to operate, establishing dozens of sites around the state. However, the current federal administration has signaled its willingness to cut this funding completely, putting more than 95% of FCIL programs in Hawai'i at risk of closure.

ECAS feels strongly that FCIL programs are an important component of the early learning landscape here in Hawai'i, and we should do all that we can to sustain them.

For this reason, ECAS strongly supports House Bill 2019 HD1.

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee

FROM: Justina Acevedo-Cross, Senior Director of Community Strategy

RE: Testimony in Support for HB 2019 HD 1, Relating to Early Learning

DATE: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 2:00 pm

LOCATION: Hearing Room 308

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **supports House Bill 2019 SD 1** relating to early learning. HCF believes it is crucial to focus on keiki ages 0-5 and their families. Starting early has long-term positive impacts, and signals a healthy start. Early learning programs have been a part of how HCF has invested in the [Health and Wellness sector of the CHANGE Framework](#) across our island home.

Family-Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) programs are an essential part of Hawai'i's early learning ecosystem. They provide engaging, literacy-rich environments that foster children's social and emotional development, strengthen parent and caregiver skills, and promote school readiness. These programs are community-based, and consistently in high demand. It's a multi-generational, culturally responsive approach that reflects how families in Hawai'i live and raise their children.

For many working families—especially those who rely on grandparents, aunts, uncles, and extended 'ohana for childcare—center-based options are not always accessible, affordable, or preferred. FCIL programs provide another option for families in Hawai'i. FCIL programs have been sustained primarily through federal funding under the Native Hawaiian Education Program. However, with the current federal administration signaling uncertainty about maintaining this funding stream. More than 95% of FCIL programs in Hawai'i are now at risk of closure. The potential loss of these programs would create a substantial gap in our early learning system.

House Bill 2019 SD 1 represents a critical opportunity to sustain a proven model. FCILs strengthen families, advance school readiness, and support long-term educational outcomes. HCF strongly urges your support of HB 2019 HD 1. Sustaining FCIL programs is a strategic investment in our keiki, our families, and the future of Hawai'i.



Parents And Children Together

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2019 HD1 RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

TO: Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, & Members,
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Trisha Kajimura, Vice-President of Strategy and External Affairs

DATE: March 3, 2026 at 2:00 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 2019 HD1 Relating to Early Learning, which appropriates funds to the Executive Office on Early Learning to administer funding for family-child interaction learning programs.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

PACT is an active member of the early learning community in Hawaii, operating Early Head Start and Head Start programs on Oahu and Hawaii Island. PACT also founded Parkway Village Preschool, the state's first Pre-K-Only public charter school in Kapolei. Family-child interaction learning programs (FCILs) are an essential early learning option for children with families that prefer not to participate in center-based settings. They also provide early learning opportunities where center-based care does not have adequate capacity.

FCILs provide multi-generational engagement that promotes the well-being of children through supporting and nurturing parents' and caregivers' capacity as their children's first teachers. FCILs offer activities and instruction that strengthen the caregiver-child relationship and enhances child development, offering families resources they otherwise may not have access to such as workforce readiness, financial literacy and food support.

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



March 3, 2026

The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Hearing on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.,
Via VideoConference, Conference Room #308
Regarding HB No. 2019, HD1, "Relating to Early Learning"

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

We ask that you **strongly support HB 2019** to appropriate funds to the Executive Office on Early Learning to administer funding for Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) programs.

Partners in Development Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that inspires and equips families and communities for success and service, using timeless Native Hawaiian values and traditions. Since 1997, PIDF has served more than 171,000 people in over 75 communities across the state (www.pidf.org). PIDF has a strong record of managing complex, multi-year federal and state grants with measurable results in early childhood education, family engagement, and youth justice. PIDF continues to step to the frontline to meet the ever-changing needs of our low-income, remote, and rural families and communities, including operating a COVID quarantine hotel to keep families safe and healthy during the pandemic, to supporting families displaced by the Maui wildfires to heal and rebuild, to continuing to support and strengthen our most vulnerable children, youth and families as they navigate increasing living costs, unemployment, and loss of federal resources.

Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) programs have been established as safe and supportive environments for families and children to thrive. We must continue these programs not only for the success of our keiki, but to empower their parents/caregivers as the best support for their families - leading to a stronger Hawai'i for all.

Over 70% of the children who graduated from our FCIL programs in 2024 exhibited the highest score of "4" on the Hawai'i State School Readiness Assessment for kindergarten. It is vital that this critical work provided by not only Partners in Development Foundation but the many other nonprofit organizations in our state continue to be supported through sufficient resources to impact the children and communities of which we serve. **We ask that you support HB2019 that would continue to bring early learning opportunities and family support to thousands across Hawai'i.**

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration of this request.

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

Shawn M. Kana'iaupuni, PhD
President and Chief Executive Officer



March 3, 2026

The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
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President and Chief Executive Officer



Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Finance

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Date: March 3, 2026

Where: Conference Room 308

TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk
Kamehameha Schools

RE: HB 2019, HD1, Relating to Early Learning

E ka Luna Ho'omalua Todd, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Takenouchi, a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike Waiwai o ka Hale o nā Lunamaka'āinana, aloha nui kākou.

Kamehameha Schools appreciates this opportunity to **support** HB 2019, HD1, which provides essential funding to the Executive Office on Early Learning to administer family-child interaction learning programs (FCILs).

For nearly forty years, FCILs have provided engaging, family-centered, Hawaiian culture-based learning for keiki (0-5) and their makua or kupuna. Embedded within many vulnerable communities across Hawai'i, FCILs strengthen 'ohana through caregiver education, home visiting, and 'ohana support services. Historically, these programs have relied heavily upon federal Native Hawaiian education funding; however dramatic shifts in federal policies and proposed funding cuts threaten to reduce the total program capacity by as much as ninety-five percent (95%). This legislation is crucial to ensuring that FCILs may continue delivering engaging, Hawaiian culture-based learning and trusted 'ohana support to communities throughout Hawai'i.

Founded in 1887 through the Will of Ke Ali'i Bernice Pauahi Pākī Bishop, Ke Kula 'o Kamehameha is a private, educational, charitable trust committed to empowering Native Hawaiians in perpetuity by improving the well-being of our people through education. We envision our haumāna, strong in E Ola!, grounded in Hawaiian and Christian values, succeeding in post-secondary education and contributing through 'ōiwi leadership to a thriving and self-determined lāhui.



Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Finance

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Date: March 3, 2026

Where: Conference Room 308

TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk
Kamehameha Schools

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

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: HB 2019 HD1- Relating to Early Learning
Hawai'i State Capitol Room 309& Via Videoconference March 03, 2026,
2:00 PM

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Respected Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2019 HD1**, which appropriates funds to the Executive Office on Early Learning to administer funding for family-child interaction learning programs.

HCAN is dedicated to advocating for policies that improve the well-being of Hawai'i's children and families. HB2019 is highly relevant to our mission, as it helps to address critical gaps in childcare, particularly in rural and underserved communities. These programs are essential components of a comprehensive early childhood education system and directly impact child development and family engagement across the state.

Family-child interaction learning programs enhance early cognitive, social, and emotional growth by engaging both children and their caregivers in structured educational activities. These programs are especially valuable in Hawai'i, where many families face barriers to accessing high-quality early learning opportunities due to cost, limited availability, or geographic constraints.

Increasing funding for these initiatives will help bridge service gaps, support child care providers, and empower families to be active participants in their children's early education. This approach not only benefits individual families but also strengthens the broader community by laying a strong foundation for future academic and social success.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. **Please Pass HB 2019 HD1.**



Date: March 3, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers

Re: House Bill 2019, Relating to Early Learning

Keiki O Ka 'Āina (KOKA) is a Native Hawaiian non-profit organization whose mission is to *Educate Children, Strengthen Families, Enrich Communities, and Perpetuate Culture*. For 30 years, KOKA has provided **Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) program** services to support early learning success in our state. Over 50,000 keiki, and their families, have been served in these programs from 1988- to the present, when these programs were first offered by Kamehameha Schools Traveling Preschool.

For over 10 years, FCILs have been part of family choice an unfunded mandate passed by our state legislature. The program has become a critical piece of our state's overall early learning landscape. It has a proven track record of providing local children and their families with highly engaging learning environments that are literacy-rich, supporting a child's social and emotional development, strengthening parent and caregiver skills, and improving school readiness. They are efficient, impactful, and in high demand.

Most recently, these programs have become learning spaces for potential early childhood educators who love working with children and families but do not yet have the educational qualifications to work in a preschool or infant-toddler center environment. In an FCIL they can participate in professional development opportunities and practice what they learn under skilled teachers and early learning mentors. These programs become stepping stones to eventually going to school and becoming an educationally qualified early childhood educator.

Historically, these programs have relied upon federal funding provided through the Native Hawaiian Education Program to operate, establishing program sites around the state. However, the current federal administration has signaled its willingness to cut this funding completely, putting more than 95% of FCIL programs in Hawai'i at risk of closure.

KOKA feels strongly that FCIL programs are an important component of the early learning landscape here in Hawai'i, and we should do all that we can to sustain them.

KOKA strongly supports House Bill 2019, which would provide funding to sustain family-child interaction learning (FCIL) programs statewide.



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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 2019 HD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING.
Report Title: Family-child Interaction Learning Programs; Executive Office on
Early Learning; Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 2019 HD1. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2019 H.D.1

Committee on Finance

Date: 3/03/26

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Room 308

Representative Chris Todd, Chair

Representative Jenna Takenouchi , Vice Chair

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

My name is Danny Goya. I am a trauma-informed care facilitator specializing in children ages 0–5, working across Hawai‘i with families in all four sectors of early childhood education and care. **I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB 2019, HD1.**

I strongly support HB2019, HD1, which appropriates critical funds to sustain and expand Family-Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) programs in Hawai‘i. This bill recognizes the essential role that high-quality, family-centered early learning opportunities play in promoting healthy child development, school readiness, and lifelong success.

I bring both professional and personal experience in early childhood education and family support. I was closely involved in the creation and implementation of the Ka Pa‘alana Homeless Family Education Program and Preschool, a pioneering FCIL-based early-learning intervention serving homeless families in Hawai‘i.

Ka Pa‘alana was intentionally designed around the FCIL framework, which combines rich early childhood learning experiences with caregiver education and partnership. Through this model, caregivers are empowered to become their children’s first and most influential educators. Since its opening, the program has helped families overcome barriers to access by integrating early learning with supportive services and culturally grounded approaches that respect and uplift families.

Our work has demonstrated that engaging caregivers as active partners in learning not only strengthens caregiver-child relationships but also leads to measurable gains in children’s expressive and receptive language, school readiness, and family resilience. Research on the Ka Pa‘alana model shows improved language outcomes for high-risk children and underscores the value of family participation in early learning.

Funding provided through HB2019, HD1 will sustain experienced FCIL programs and help prevent the drastic reduction of these critical early learning services that would otherwise result from federal funding cuts. These programs are proven, effective investments in children, families, and the future workforce of our islands.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB2019, HD1 and ensure that FCIL programs across Hawai‘i remain available, accessible, and culturally responsive for the children and families who need them most.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.



Daniel Goya

Trauma-Informed Care Facilitator

Specializing in Early Childhood (0–5)

Ke Ala Ho‘aka, LLC

Elaine Yamashita
105 Kamehameiki Rd.
Kula, HI 96790-8451
808-281-1216
elainey208@gmail.com

March 1, 2026

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

From: Elaine Yamashita

Re: HB2019HD1

Aloha Honorable Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Finance Committee:

While I serve as chair of the Early Learning Board, this is my personal testimony. I've been an advocate for early childhood care and education since the 1980s. I am professor emerita of University of Hawai'i Maui College, where I was the program coordinator for Early Childhood Education from 2000-2019.

I support HB 2019HD1. Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) programs are an important part of our early learning system and provide valuable information and support to many families.

When I was at UHMC, I had the privilege of visiting several FCIL programs and saw and felt the positive energy. Because the age ranges of the keiki are from birth to kindergarten entry, the FCIL staff provide developmentally appropriate information for each activity across the age range. They observe the keiki and interact with the adults and keiki, and I also saw activities relevant to the community's culture and context.

It's been distressing to see how the federal cuts have impacted these programs. I appreciate the state looking at ways to mitigate the federal cuts and hope that FCIL programs are supported.

Mahalo for your attention and support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Elaine Yamashita
elainey208@gmail.com



Date: March 3, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers

Re: House Bill 2019, Relating to Early Learning

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For over 10 years, FCILs have been part of family choice an unfunded mandate passed by our state legislature. The program has become a critical piece of our state's overall early learning landscape. It has a proven track record of providing local children and their families with highly engaging learning environments that are literacy-rich, supporting a child's social and emotional development, strengthening parent and caregiver skills, and improving school readiness. They are efficient, impactful, and in high demand.

Most recently, these programs have become learning spaces for potential early childhood educators who love working with children and families but do not yet have the educational qualifications to work in a preschool or infant-toddler center environment. In an FCIL they can participate in professional development opportunities and practice what they learn under skilled teachers and early learning mentors. These programs become stepping stones to eventually going to school and becoming an educationally qualified early childhood educator.

Historically, these programs have relied upon federal funding provided through the Native Hawaiian Education Program to operate, establishing program sites around the state. However, the current federal administration has signaled its willingness to cut this funding completely, putting more than 95% of FCIL programs in Hawai'i at risk of closure.

KOKA feels strongly that FCIL programs are an important component of the early learning landscape here in Hawai'i, and we should do all that we can to sustain them.

KOKA strongly supports House Bill 2019, which would provide funding to sustain family-child interaction learning (FCIL) programs statewide.

HB-2019-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:48:31 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Waiiau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Monica Waiiau, and I am writing in strong support of HB2019.

Every day, I see how access to early learning programs uplifts not just keiki, but entire ‘ohana. When families have safe, nurturing, and culturally grounded spaces for their children, parents are better able to work, pursue education, and provide stability at home. Our keiki thrive when they are supported early — socially, emotionally, and academically.

HB2019 is about investing in Hawai‘i’s future by strengthening the foundation for our youngest learners today. It supports working families, promotes equity, and helps ensure that opportunities are not determined by zip code.

Please pass HB2019 for our keiki, our families, and our communities.

Mahalo for your service and consideration.

With aloha,
Monica Waiiau
Honolulu, Hawai‘i



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