



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony presented before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
February 23, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

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### SB 2545 SD1: RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The University of Hawai'i is in strong support of SB 2545 SD1 that establishes the executive office of early learning, replaces the early learning council with the early learning advisory board, and makes an appropriate to establish the executive office of early learning.

Recognizing that a child's positive early learning experiences have significant benefit to individual lifelong learning capacity and to society, the University concurs that it is critical and urgent to establish an office and director of early learning at the executive level. SB 2545 SD1 establishes, in the proposed executive office of early learning, the responsibility for overseeing, developing, and assessing early care and education programs across the state, coordinating programs and policy efforts across agencies, and creates a state plan for an early learning system. This office will build upon progress that has been made throughout many years in Hawai'i by the efforts of the existing Early Learning Council, state agencies, and public, private, and community groups.

A systematic approach toward early care and learning has the potential of enhancing existing capacity of services and use of resources. As a member of the Early Learning Council, one of the areas of highest concern to the University is the access to and relevance of educational programs for the early childhood workforce. To meet the needs of this workforce requires a coordinated approach and understanding of needs across different sectors and regions of the state. An executive office, as described in SB 2545, could create such a coordinated approach that would support our own review of academic and workforce programs at the University to meet the state's needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2545 SD1.