



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony presented before the  
House Committees on Finance  
April 2, 2012 at 3:00 p.m.

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### SB 2545 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and members of the House Committee on Finance:

The University of Hawai'i is in strong support of SB 2545 SD2 HD1 that establishes the executive office of early learning and replaces the early learning council with an early learning advisory board.

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 SD2 HD1 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. 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 SD2 HD1, 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 SD2 HD1.