



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
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by

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SB 2878, SD2, HD1 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING

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

I am Linda K. Johnsrud, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy, University of Hawai'i System. On behalf of the University System, I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 2878, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 1, which establishes an early learning system for Hawai'i, creates an Early Learning Council to administer the system, and establishes the Keiki First Steps three- and four-year old program.

The University of Hawai'i is a strong advocate of measures to increase the success of Hawai'i's students as they move through the educational pipeline from birth through adulthood. We are an active partner in the Hawai'i P-20 Initiative, and firmly believe that higher education's role is critical if we are to improve the educational level of all of Hawai'i's citizens.

As a partner in Hawai'i's P-20 Initiative with Superintendent Pat Hamamoto and Good Beginnings President Liz Chun, we grapple with the questions as to what strategies are needed to ensure every child enters school ready to succeed, schools are ready for children, and early childhood professionals have access to education that will increase their capacity to teach and nurture the young learner. The Kellogg Foundation Grant of \$10 million is an example of our efforts at statewide collaboration and commitment toward early childhood education at the community level.

We believe there must be a concerted effort to provide quality early education for Hawai'i's keiki, and know that ultimately how successfully children progress through the educational pipeline will affect their entrance into higher education and lifelong learning.

The University of Hawai'i is prepared to work with the early learning system to provide the early childhood education and professional development that are referenced in the language of the bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.