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Senate Committee on Education
Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair

March 16, 2015

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Harimoto and Committee Members:

This testimony is submitted in support for HB820 HD2, which establishes the Executive Office on Early Learning Prekindergarten Program to be administered by the Executive Office on Early Learning and provided through Department of Education public schools and public charter schools.

The Hui for Excellence in Education (HE'E) is a diverse coalition of over 40 parent and community organizations dedicated to improving student achievement by increasing family and community engagement and partnerships in our schools. Our member list is attached.

The Coalition has been a strong advocate for early learning since our inception in 2010. We have supported early learning legislation for the past few years, and have been particularly concerned about the late-born four year olds, who have not been able to attend public Kindergarten since the 2014-2015 year. Therefore, we support HB820 HD1, which establishes an early learning prekindergarten program to be administered by the Executive Office on Early Learning. We like that the program focuses on four-year olds with priority to underserved or at-risk children. We also like that the program incorporates high quality standards and developmentally appropriate practices, which includes attention to family engagement, the foundation of our Coalition. Further, we are encouraged that the bill incorporates points on the program implementation, specifically, supporting teacher professional development, coordination with other agencies to support children and data collection to monitor the progress of the program.

Finally, we recommend that the bill be amended to align with the Senate companion version, SB844 SD2, adding language granting Geographic Exceptions for students attending schools with a Prekindergarten Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Our support of this bill represents a 75% consensus or more of our membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

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| Academy 21 | *Parents and Children Together |
| After-School All-Stars Hawaii | *Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i |
| Alliance for Place Based Learning | Punahou School PUEO Program |
| *Castle Complex Community Council | Teach for America |
| *Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS | The Learning Coalition |
| Center for Civic Education | US PACOM |
| Coalition for Children with Special Needs | University of Hawai'i College of Education |
| *Faith Action for Community Equity | YMCA of Honolulu |
| Fresh Leadership LLC | <i>Voting Members (*) Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the coalition.</i> |
| Girl Scouts Hawaii | |
| *Good Beginnings Alliance | |
| Harold K.L. Castle Foundation | |
| *Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice | |
| Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars | |
| *Hawai'i Charter School Network | |
| *Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition | |
| *Hawaii State PTSA | |
| Hawai'i State Student Council | |
| Hawai'i State Teachers Association | |
| Hawai'i P-20 | |
| Hawai'i 3Rs | |
| Head Start Collaboration Office | |
| It's All About Kids | |
| *INPEACE | |
| Joint Venture Education Forum | |
| Junior Achievement of Hawaii | |
| *Kaho'omiki | |
| Kamehameha Schools | |
| Kanu Hawai'i | |
| *Kaua'i Ho'okele Council | |
| Keiki to Career Kaua'i | |
| Kupu A'e | |
| *Leaders for the Next Generation | |
| Learning First | |
| McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds | |
| Our Public School | |
| *Pacific Resources for Education and Learning | |