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Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Ronald Kouchi, Vice Chair

February 25, 2014

Dear Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kouchi and Committee Members:

This testimony is submitted in support for SB844 SD1, 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 SB844 SD1, which establishes an early learning public 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 are happy to see that the bill was amended to add 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

Academy 21
After-School All-Stars Hawaii
Alliance for Place Based Learning
*Castle Complex Community Council
*Castle-Kahuku Principal and CAS
Center for Civic Education
Coalition for Children with Special Needs
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
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
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Punahou School PUEO Program

Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

YMCA of Honolulu

Voting Members () Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the coalition.*