**TO:** Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair

 Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

 House Committee on Education

**FROM:** Robert G. Peters, Chair

 Early Learning Board

**SUBJECT: Measure:** HB 1999, HD 1 – Relating to Education

 **Hearing Date:** Friday, February 25, 2022

 **Time:** 11:00 A.M.

 **Location:** Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

**Description:** Appropriates funds to the department of human services for the preschool open doors program. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD1)

**Early Learning Board Position: Support the Intent**

Aloha. I am Robert G. Peters, Chair of the Early Learning Board, offering testimony in support of the intent of HB 1999, HD 1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services for the Preschool Open Doors program (POD).

As the governing board for EOEL, we thank the Legislature for its support of EOEL’s work to increase access to high-quality early learning. EOEL is statutorily responsible for the development of the State’s early childhood system that shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout the state, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority given to underserved or at-risk children.

Preschool Open Doors provides access for Hawaii’s families to early learning care for their children. Without this funding, many find it challenging if not impossible to afford early learning care, which we know benefits children as they begin a journey through the educational continuum. It also affords families the opportunity to remain in the workforce. An investment in Preschool Open Doors pays dividends both now and in the future. Therefore, the ELB supports the intent of this bill.

Mahalo for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of the intent of HB 1999, HD 1.

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