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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY POVERTY REDUCTION TASK FORCE.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1.   **Findings and purpose.**   (a)   The legislature  
2 finds that:

3           (1)   It is in the public interest to pursue the common good  
4                whereby all families and individuals in Hawaii have  
5                improved access to economic and educational  
6                opportunities that help families achieve self-  
7                sufficiency and financial security while reducing the  
8                number of Hawaii residents living in poverty;

9           (2)   Poverty has social and economic costs for children and  
10                families, communities, and the State.  Children living  
11                in poverty often experience lower academic achievement  
12                and increased health and behavioral problems.  These  
13                problems often continue into adulthood, resulting in  
14                greater social and economic costs to society,  
15                including increased crime rates, health problems, and  
16                negative economic impacts estimated to cost the United  
17                States \$500,000,000,000 in lost earnings each year;



1 (3) More and more middle-class Hawaii families and  
2 children are living from paycheck to paycheck,  
3 especially in these very difficult economic times; and

4 (4) More states are recognizing that reducing poverty by  
5 addressing the needs of low- and moderate-income  
6 families is a critical economic development issue.  
7 Reducing poverty requires strategic, integrated, and  
8 comprehensive approaches that create opportunities for  
9 families to achieve economic success, including  
10 creating quality jobs, providing work supports,  
11 promoting greater collaboration with the private  
12 sector, and implementing targeted tax policies.

13 (b) The purposes of this Act are to create a task force:

14 (1) Assess current state policies and practices, along  
15 with evidence-based solutions utilized in other  
16 states, that promote economic opportunity and poverty  
17 reduction; and

18 (2) Develop a strategic, integrated, and comprehensive  
19 plan to expand economic opportunities in Hawaii to  
20 reduce, by at least fifty per cent by 2020, the number  
21 of Hawaii residents, including children and families,  
22 living in poverty.



1 SECTION 2. **Definitions.** As used in this Act, unless the  
2 context clearly requires otherwise:

3 "Federal poverty level" means the poverty guidelines  
4 updated periodically in the federal register by the United  
5 States Department of Health and Human Services under the  
6 authority of Title 42 United States Code Section 9902(2).

7 "Poverty" means living at or below one hundred per cent of  
8 the federal poverty level.

9 "Self-sufficiency standard" means a measure of the income  
10 needed by a family of a given composition in a given place to  
11 adequately meet its basic needs without public or private  
12 assistance.

13 "Supplemental nutrition assistance program" means the  
14 federal supplemental nutrition assistance program created in  
15 Title 7 United States Code Section 2011 et seq.

16 "Task force" means the economic opportunity poverty  
17 reduction task force.

18 SECTION 3. **Economic opportunity poverty reduction task**  
19 **force; composition; chairperson; term; no compensation;**  
20 **meetings; subcommittees; duties.** (a) There is hereby created  
21 the economic opportunity poverty reduction task force to assess  
22 current state practices that promote economic opportunity and



1 poverty reduction and to develop a strategic, integrated, and  
2 comprehensive plan to expand economic opportunities in Hawaii to  
3 reduce, by at least fifty per cent by 2020, the number of Hawaii  
4 residents, including children and families, living in poverty.

5 (b) The task force shall consist of ten members of the  
6 legislature as follows:

7 (1) Five members of the house of representatives, three of  
8 whom shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of  
9 representatives and two of whom shall be appointed by  
10 the minority leader of the house of representatives;  
11 and

12 (2) Five members of the senate, three of whom shall be  
13 appointed by the president of the senate and two of  
14 whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the  
15 senate.

16 (c) Each year, the speaker of the house of representatives  
17 and the president of the senate shall jointly designate one  
18 member of the task force to serve as chairperson of the task  
19 force. The first chairperson shall be a member of the house of  
20 representatives. Thereafter, the position of task force  
21 chairperson shall alternate between the house of representatives  
22 and the senate.



1 (d) Each member of the task force shall serve a two-year  
2 term; provided that the speaker of the house of representatives  
3 and the president of the senate shall jointly select five of the  
4 initial members to serve one-year terms. Initial appointments  
5 to the task force shall be made by August 1, 2010. Members may  
6 serve for unlimited consecutive terms.

7 (e) The members of the task force shall serve without  
8 compensation and shall not be reimbursed for any expenses  
9 incurred in the performance of their duties.

10 (f) The task force shall meet during each interim at least  
11 four times and additionally as convened by the chairperson.

12 (g) The task force shall appoint subcommittees to advise  
13 the task force in completing its duties. The chairperson shall  
14 select subcommittee members from stakeholder groups that shall  
15 include but are not limited to relevant executive branch  
16 agencies, the counties, business and labor organizations,  
17 educational organizations, advocates, and individuals directly  
18 affected by the work of the task force. The chairperson of the  
19 task force shall appoint a member of the task force to chair  
20 each subcommittee.

21 (h) The task force shall:



- 1           (1) Assess current state policies and practices that  
2           promote economic opportunity and poverty reduction  
3           and, before December 31, 2011, shall develop a  
4           strategic, integrated, and comprehensive plan that  
5           will expand economic opportunities in Hawaii and, by  
6           2020, reduce by at least fifty per cent the number of  
7           Hawaii residents, including children and families,  
8           living in poverty;
- 9           (2) Study and evaluate best policies and practices that:
- 10           (A) Build family assets and financial stability;
- 11           (B) Increase preschool through postsecondary  
12           educational opportunities;
- 13           (C) Expand the work force with quality jobs that meet  
14           private sector needs;
- 15           (D) Make work pay through the use of fair and  
16           sustainable targeted tax policies; and
- 17           (E) Address work-support issues;
- 18           (3) Study and evaluate:
- 19           (A) Federally-supported and state-supported programs  
20           that serve persons living in poverty;
- 21           (B) The economic impact of poverty;



- 1 (C) Current policies and services that affect persons
- 2 living below the self-sufficiency standard;
- 3 (D) The interaction of various issues that affect
- 4 poverty, such as a lack of education, health
- 5 care, housing, income, child care, and food
- 6 security; and
- 7 (E) The supplemental nutrition assistance program,
- 8 with the goal of recommending changes to increase
- 9 participation and secure additional federal funds
- 10 for assistance with education and training; and
- 11 (4) Prior to January 15, 2011, and prior to January 15
- 12 each year thereafter, the task force shall prepare and
- 13 submit a written report to the legislature that
- 14 includes:
  - 15 (A) A summary of the work accomplished by the task
  - 16 force over the prior year;
  - 17 (B) In the initial annual report, an assessment of
  - 18 current policies and procedures that address
  - 19 poverty;
  - 20 (C) A general description of the scope of the problem
  - 21 in Hawaii with respect to poverty;



1 (D) An outline of the issues being addressed by the  
2 task force and the proposed time frame for  
3 addressing those issues; and

4 (E) Any legislative recommendations as the task force  
5 deems necessary.

6 (i) The task force shall terminate on June 30, 2021.

7 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2010.

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**Report Title:**

Economic Opportunity Poverty Reduction Task Force

**Description:**

Establishes a joint legislative economic opportunity poverty reduction task force to advance economic opportunity to reduce by at least 50% by 2020, the number of Hawaii residents, including children and families, living in poverty. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

