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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE 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 support,  
11 promoting greater collaboration with the private  
12 sector, and implementing targeted tax policies.
- 13 (b) The purpose of this Act is to:
- 14 (1) Create a task force to assess current state policies  
15 and practices, along with evidence-based solutions  
16 used in other states, that promote economic  
17 opportunity and poverty 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 2021, 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; established; subcommittees; duties.** (a) There is hereby  
20 created the economic opportunity poverty reduction task force to  
21 assess current state practices that promote economic opportunity  
22 and poverty reduction and to develop a strategic, integrated,



1 and comprehensive plan to expand economic opportunities in  
2 Hawaii to reduce, by at least fifty per cent by 2021, the number  
3 of Hawaii residents, including children and families, living in  
4 poverty.

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

7 (1) Two members of the house of representatives appointed  
8 by the speaker of the house of representatives from  
9 lists submitted by the majority leader of the house of  
10 representatives and the minority leader of the house  
11 of representatives;

12 (2) Two members of the senate appointed by the president  
13 of the senate from lists submitted by the majority  
14 leader of the senate and the minority leader of the  
15 senate; and

16 (3) One member appointed by the governor.

17 (c) The members shall select one member to serve as  
18 chairperson of the task force.

19 (d) Each member of the task force shall serve a two-year  
20 term. Initial appointments to the task force shall be made by  
21 August 1, 2011. Members may serve for unlimited consecutive  
22 terms.



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

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

6 (g) The task force shall appoint subcommittees to advise  
7 the task force in completing its duties. The chairperson shall  
8 select subcommittee members from stakeholder groups that shall  
9 include relevant executive branch agencies, the counties,  
10 business and labor organizations, educational organizations,  
11 advocates, and individuals directly affected by the work of the  
12 task force. The chairperson of the task force shall appoint a  
13 member of the task force to chair each subcommittee.

14 (h) The task force shall:

15 (1) Assess current state policies and practices that  
16 promote economic opportunity and poverty reduction  
17 and, before December 22, 2012, shall develop a  
18 strategic, integrated, and comprehensive plan that  
19 will expand economic opportunities in Hawaii and, by  
20 2021, reduce by at least fifty per cent the number of  
21 Hawaii residents, including children and families,  
22 living in poverty;



- 1           (2) Study and evaluate best policies and practices that:
- 2           (A) Build family assets and financial stability;
- 3           (B) Increase preschool through postsecondary
- 4           educational opportunities;
- 5           (C) Expand the work force with quality jobs that meet
- 6           private sector needs;
- 7           (D) Make work pay through the use of fair and
- 8           sustainable targeted tax policies; and
- 9           (E) Address work-support issues;
- 10          (3) Study and evaluate:
- 11          (A) Federally-supported and state-supported programs
- 12          that serve persons living in poverty;
- 13          (B) The economic impact of poverty;
- 14          (C) Current policies and services that affect persons
- 15          living below the self-sufficiency standard;
- 16          (D) The interaction of various issues that affect
- 17          poverty, such as a lack of education, health
- 18          care, housing, income, child care, and food
- 19          security; and
- 20          (E) The supplemental nutrition assistance program,
- 21          with the goal of recommending changes to increase



1 participation and secure additional federal funds  
2 for assistance with education and training; and

3 (4) Prior to December 22, 2012, and prior to December 22  
4 each year thereafter, the task force shall prepare and  
5 submit a written report to the legislature that  
6 includes:

7 (A) A summary of the work accomplished by the task  
8 force over the prior year;

9 (B) In the initial annual report, an assessment of  
10 current policies and procedures that address  
11 poverty;

12 (C) A general description of the scope of the problem  
13 in Hawaii with respect to poverty;

14 (D) An outline of the issues being addressed by the  
15 task force and the proposed time frame for  
16 addressing those issues; and

17 (E) Any legislative recommendations as the task force  
18 deems necessary.

19 (i) The task force shall terminate on June 30, 2022.

20 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
22 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 and the



1 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
2 2012-2013 for operational expenses of the economic opportunity  
3 poverty reduction task force, including support staff and  
4 services.

5 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the legislature  
6 for the purposes of this Act.

7 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2112.





**Report Title:**

Economic Opportunity Poverty Reduction Task Force

**Description:**

Establishes the economic opportunity poverty reduction task force to develop a strategic, integrated, and comprehensive plan to expand economic opportunities in Hawaii to reduce, by at least 50 per cent by 2021, the number of Hawaii residents, including children and families, living in poverty. Effective July 1, 2112. (HB734 HD1)

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