
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LITERACY.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's children
2 and families benefit immensely from participation in literacy
3 programs. Literacy programs primarily assist children with
4 learning to read, however, these programs also serve to bridge
5 the gap between home and school in Hawaii's community by
6 building stronger family relationships, improving the academic
7 tone within homes, and changing family attitudes toward school.

8 The benefits of literacy programs are evident in the work
9 of existing nonprofits. For example, Read Aloud America is a
10 Hawaii nonprofit that brings children and parents together in
11 local schools and motivates them to read. Since 1999, Read
12 Aloud America has served eighty-six Hawaii public schools and
13 over 315,000 adults and children. In addition to parents
14 increasing their own reading time, eighty-seven per cent of
15 parents who participated in the program reported that their
16 children's voluntary reading time had increased, and seventy-one
17 per cent reported their children spent less time with electronic
18 media. Teachers also see encouraging results and have reported



1 positive changes in student behavior, increased interest in
2 reading, and improved home to school relationships.

3 Read to Me International is another example of an existing
4 local organization committed to improving child literacy.

5 Active on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, Molokai, and Kauai, this
6 nonprofit collaborates with community volunteers to educate
7 families about the importance of reading aloud to children and
8 of raising children who value reading.

9 The legislature further finds that child literacy programs
10 which have previously been supported by funds from the
11 department of human services are currently suffering from a lack
12 of state funding. The governor's council for literacy was
13 established in 1987 to work toward a literate Hawaii, and
14 Hawaii's families continue to need education and resources to
15 help children learn to read and to encourage families to become
16 more engaged in their local schools and community.

17 The purpose of this Act is to establish a statewide
18 literacy program under the department of human services, and to
19 appropriate funds for its establishment. By utilizing existing
20 programs, and collaborating with nonprofit groups to provide
21 direct services to Hawaii's families, the department of human



1 services will administer a literacy program that supports a
2 bright future for Hawaii's children and families.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§346- Statewide literacy program. (a) There shall be
7 established within the department a statewide literacy program
8 to help increase Hawaii's literacy rates and benefit Hawaii's
9 children and families. The department shall administer the
10 literacy program.

11 (b) The department may contract with third-party
12 organizations and nonprofit organizations to assist with
13 carrying out the literacy program."

14 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 for
17 the department of human services to establish a statewide
18 literacy program, including all program costs and hiring of any
19 necessary staff.

20 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
21 human services for the purposes of this Act.



- 1 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.
- 2 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Child Literacy; Department of Human Services; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a statewide literacy program under the Department of Human Services, with direct services to be provided by existing programs and nonprofits. Makes an appropriation. Effective July 1, 2050. (HB1596 HD1)

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