

JAN 29 2015

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 literacy programs. Most
3 importantly, literacy programs assist children with learning to
4 read. However, literacy programs also serve to bridge the gap
5 between home and school in Hawaii's communities by building
6 stronger family relationships, improving the academic tone
7 within homes, and changing family attitudes toward school.

8 The benefits of literacy programs are evident in the work
9 of existing nonprofits. Read Aloud America is a Hawaii
10 nonprofit that brings children and parents together in local
11 schools and motivates them to read. In addition to parents
12 increasing their own reading time, eighty-seven per cent of
13 parents who participated in the program report that their
14 children's voluntary reading time increased, and seventy-one per
15 cent report that their children spend less time with electronic
16 media. Teachers have also seen encouraging results and report
17 positive changes in student behavior, increased interest in



1 reading, and improved home to school relationships. Since 1999,
2 Read Aloud America has served eighty-nine Hawaii public schools
3 and over 328,989 adults and children. Another organization,
4 Read to Me International, is also committed to improving child
5 literacy. Active on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, Molokai, and
6 Kauai, the nonprofit collaborates with community volunteers to
7 educate families about the importance of reading aloud to
8 children and raising children who value reading.

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

18 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
19 department of human services to establish a statewide literacy
20 program. Utilizing existing programs and nonprofits 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 2015-2016 and
17 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
18 year 2016-2017 for the department of human services to establish
19 a statewide literacy program, including all program costs and
20 hiring of any necessary staff.



S.B. NO. 1242

1 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
2 of human services for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

4 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2015.

5

INTRODUCED BY:

Wm P. Ke. BR



S.B. NO. 1242

Report Title:

Child Literacy; Department of Human Services; Appropriation

Description:

Provides funding to the department of human services to establish a statewide literacy program utilizing local programs and nonprofits to provide direct services.

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