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KATHRYN S. MATAYOSHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 02/03/2016  
**Time:** 02:00 PM  
**Location:** 309  
**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

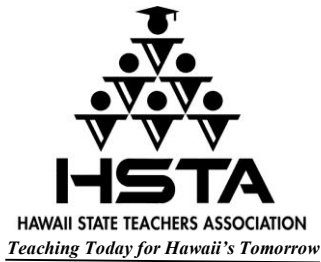
**Title of Bill:** HB 2132 RELATING TO STUDENT MEALS.

**Purpose of Bill:** Prohibits denying a student a meal for the first: (1) thirty days of a semester while the student's application for free or reduced lunch is being processed; or (2) week the student's meal fund balance is zero or negative. Authorizes DOE to adopt rules or policies on the collection of funds for negative student meal balances.

**Department's Position:**

The Department of Education supports the intent and overall concept of HB 2132 as it includes initiatives supportive of our goals and objectives. However, we are concerned about the cost implications generated by this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION

RE: HB 2132 - RELATING TO STUDENT MEALS.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2016

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports HB 2132**, relating to student meals, **with suggested amendments**.

In Hawai'i, food insecurity is one of the most pressing manifestations of overall socioeconomic inequality. Over 70,000 public school students eat free or reduced-price meals in our state, though only 40 percent eat school breakfasts. Hawai'i ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in school breakfast participation rates among qualifying students.

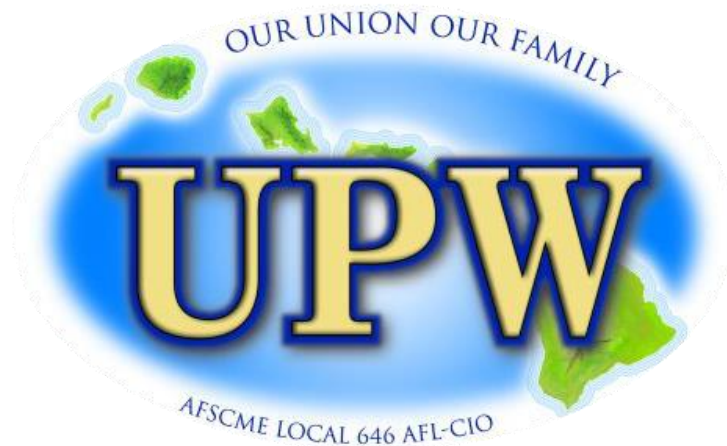
Congress established the National School Lunch Program, in 1946, and School Breakfast Program, fully implemented in 1975, to ensure that low-income students are properly nourished. Yet, many local families struggle to provide nutritious meals for their children. According the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, in Hawai'i, 15.3 percent of families experience food insecurity, meaning that "they do not always know how they will afford their next meal." An additional 3.9 percent are "very low food secure" families that have significantly reduced food consumption because of economic hardship.

At the same time, 47 percent of all public school students qualify for the Department of Education's free and reduced lunch program, a number that has risen by 20 percent since 2007 because of economic decline and cost of living increases. Low-income students are, again, less likely to receive adequate meals at home, leaving them without the calories necessary to perform basic academic tasks. Cases of chronic hunger can lead to achievement gaps, concentration loss, illness, increased absenteeism, behavioral problems, depression, and misdiagnosed learning

disabilities. Thus, providing a decent meal for our impoverished children—or in this case, ensuring that those meals aren't unnecessarily taken away—is a moral and educational imperative.

To make this measure more effective, however, we suggest an amendment to proposed subsection §302A-404(b)(2) to read: “Within **two weeks** following a student’s meal fund account reaching a zero or negative balance.” Many parents, particularly from low-income families, are paid on a two-week cycle. Our requested amendment will prevent children whose balance runs out during the beginning of a pay cycle from being denied access to school meals, something that could be particularly important to families facing unexpected financial emergencies.

Hungry students cannot focus. To ensure that our students are well-fed and ready to learn, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



The Hawaii State House of Representatives  
The Twenty-Eighth Legislature  
Regular Session of 2016

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (EDN)  
The Honorable Roy M. Takumi, Chair  
The Honorable Takashi Ohio, Vice Chair

DATE OF HEARING: Wednesday, February 3, 2016  
TIME OF HEARING: 2:00 p.m.  
PLACE OF HEARING: Conference Room 309

**TESTIMONY ON HB2132 RELATING TO STUDENT MEALS**

By Dayton M. Nakanelua,  
State Director of the United Public Workers,  
AFSCME, Local 646, AFL-CIO

My name is Dayton M. Nakanelua, state director of the United Public Workers, AFSCME, Local 646, and AFL-CIO (UPW). The UPW is the exclusive representative for approximately 11,000 public employees, which include blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 01 and institutional, health and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

HB2132 provides that no student shall be denied a meal solely for the failure to pay within the first thirty days of a semester while the student's application for free or reduced lunch is being processed, or within one week following a student's meal fund account reaching a zero or negative balance.

The UPW strongly supports this measure.

Thank you for then opportunity to submit this testimony.



February 2, 2016

To:           Chairperson Roy M. Takumi  
              Vice Chairperson Takashi Ohno  
              Members of the Education Committee

From:       Matthew Darrah

Subject:     Support of HB2132

My name is Matthew Darrah and I'm a student at Kalaheo High School. I purchase school lunch daily at full price and in my perspective and the perspectives of other students, to pick out and prepare our school lunch to ultimately have it taken away from us. I'm not looking for free lunch, I'm looking for understanding. That is exactly why I'm in **support** of HB2132. School is demanding enough, adding hunger into that mix brings forth lack of energy, focus, and motivation, plus behavioral issues such as agitation and even depression. This falls even greater on kids who are taking AP and honors classes who are under the high-stakes pressure. Furthermore, many students partake in extracurricular activities like sports. Kids without lunch or proper nutrition during the day experience notably diminished physical capabilities at practice.

For parents, the feeling of knowing their son or daughter is coming home hungry is anything but happy. Parents pay all kinds of school fees and try to support their kid in every way manageable. But paying full price has its toll on parents living paycheck to paycheck; it's frustrating for parents that miss one deadline to hear their kid bit the bullet. So please understand the situation and take this account of the student's perspective and hopefully **pass HB2132**.