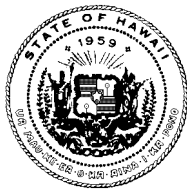




# SB 1242

Measure Title:	RELATING TO LITERACY.
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.
Companion:	
Package:	None
Current Referral:	HSH, WAM
Introducer(s):	KOUCHI (Introduced by request of another party)



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 13, 2015

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Rachael Wong, DrPH, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 1242 – RELATING TO LITERACY**

Hearing: Thursday, February 17, 2015, 1:20 PM  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to establish and make an appropriation for a statewide literacy program under the Department of Human Services; the bill proposes to allow direct services to be provided by existing programs and non-profits.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully opposes this measure based upon the following concerns: this may result in the duplication of services, the DHS is not the appropriate agency to develop, implement and monitor such a program, and the cost implications as far as passage of the bill will likely replace and or adversely impact priorities in the Executive Budget.

This bill proposes to establish and fund a statewide literacy program that will duplicate the literacy and lifelong learning program that currently exists through the Board of Education and administered by the Hawaii State Public Library System. Section 312-8, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), provides:

**§312-8 Literacy and lifelong learning program.** (a) In addition to its other duties, the board of education, through the state librarian, shall:

- (1) Provide for the establishment and ongoing operation of a literacy and lifelong learning program for the public libraries in the State;
- (2) Provide coordination and facilitation of the activities of literacy service providers and literacy programs in the public, private, and volunteer sectors; and
- (3) Develop public-private sector literacy partnerships for literacy program support.

(b) The objectives of the literacy and lifelong learning program shall be to provide programmatic activities that promote intergenerational learning and well-being by improving parents' skills and attitudes toward education; increasing children's learning skills; enhancing parenting skills; and uniting adults and children in positive educational experiences.

...

[L 1993, c 361, pt of §1; am L 1996, c 89, §13; am L 1997, c 310 §1; am L 2001, c 109, §1]"

The DHS previously funded a similar program from 2007 – 2011 using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal funds. The basis for the funding was that the program provided a “family strengthening” service under TANF Purpose 3 – the prevention and reduction of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and TANF Purpose 4 – to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families, and not because the DHS has the expertise in the area of developing, monitoring, or implementing statewide literacy programs. The DHS terminated this contracted service to reprioritize the depleted TANF federal funds to the program's core purposes of providing cash assistance and work/employment program services. The DHS's priorities with regard to TANF funding continues to be focusing on these core purposes that support a families' ability to become self-sufficient.

For the committee's review and consideration, the budget proposal from the literacy non-profit organization that the DHS last contracted with, proposed that to provide a state-wide reading program that addresses positive youth development and family strengthening, a total of \$2,648,492 for a minimum of 48 schools during school year 2014-2015 would be required. This proposed amount equals approximately \$55,177 per school, per year. Based on this proposed figure, it would cost the State \$9,876,693 per year in general funds to provide this literacy service statewide to 179 elementary schools.

Should the Legislature decide to pass the measure and appropriate general funds, the DHS requests that the Legislature consider placing such a program with an agency that currently has the experience in the area of developing, monitoring, and implementing statewide literacy programs, or experience in developing reading programs with measures for literacy progress.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.