
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS TO
BE EDUCATED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF HEAVY
BACKPACKS AND TO TAKE PROACTIVE MEASURES TO AVOID INJURY.

1 WHEREAS, overloaded school backpacks are increasingly
2 causing back pain and spinal strain to students across the
3 nation; and
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5 WHEREAS, because spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully
6 developed until after the age of sixteen, overweight backpacks
7 are a source of repeated low-level stress that may result in
8 chronic neck, shoulder, or back pain in children; and
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10 WHEREAS, according to the United States Consumer Product
11 Safety Commission, more than seven thousand emergency room
12 visits each year are due to backpack-related injuries; and
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14 WHEREAS, studies show that heavy loads carried on the back
15 have the potential to damage the soft tissues of the shoulder,
16 causing microstructural damage to the nerves and damage to
17 internal organs; and
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19 WHEREAS, studies show an increase in curvatures of the
20 spine and compressed intervertebral height when backpacks exceed
21 ten percent of a child's body weight; and
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23 WHEREAS, the 2010 Global Burden of Disease Study shows back
24 pain and musculoskeletal disorders as the leading causes of
25 disability worldwide; and
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27 WHEREAS, children's textbooks are much heavier now than
28 they were in the past, and students also often carry computers,
29 cell phones, water bottles, athletic shoes, band instruments,



1 and other equipment considered essential to have readily
2 available; and

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4 WHEREAS, studies show that more than ninety percent of
5 students carry backpacks that weigh as much as twenty-five
6 percent of the child's body weight; and

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8 WHEREAS, backpacks often are not worn correctly but are
9 frequently slung over one shoulder or allowed to hang
10 significantly below the waistline, increasing the weight on the
11 shoulders and making the child lean forward when walking or
12 stoop forward when standing to compensate for the weight; now,
13 therefore,

14

15 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
16 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
17 of 2018, the Senate concurring, that all school administrators,
18 teachers, parents, and students are strongly urged to be
19 educated about the potential health impacts of heavy backpacks
20 and to take proactive measures to avoid injury; and

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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education is urged
23 to develop policies and procedures to allow licensed
24 chiropractors to conduct interval scoliosis examinations on
25 children in schools; and

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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that schools are urged to work with
28 their parent-teacher associations to assess the extent to which
29 students use overweight backpacks and to promote innovative
30 strategies to lessen the need to take all school materials and
31 books back and forth each day; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that schools are urged to consider
34 the following when developing their backpack education talking
35 points:

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37 (1) Encourage children to use backpacks that weigh no more
38 than a maximum of ten percent of the child's body
39 weight;

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- 1 (2) Encourage the use of ergonomic backpacks with
- 2 individualized compartments to efficiently hold books
- 3 and equipment;
- 4
- 5 (3) Encourage children to wear both shoulder straps and
- 6 not sling their backpacks over one shoulder;
- 7
- 8 (4) Encourage the use of backpacks with wide, padded
- 9 adjustable straps that fit a child's body;
- 10
- 11 (5) Encourage leaving the heaviest books at school and
- 12 using handouts or workbooks for homework assignments;
- 13
- 14 (6) Consider increased use of electronic textbooks as
- 15 federal and state funding becomes available; and
- 16
- 17 (7) Consider integrated in-class education about backpack
- 18 weight, for example, by using a hanging scale in the
- 19 classroom to enable students to weigh backpacks and
- 20 track the related data to determine ways to lighten
- 21 loads; and
- 22

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 24 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
 25 Board of Education, the Superintendent of Education, the
 26 Director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, and
 27 the Executive Director of the Hawaii State Public Charter School
 28 Commission.

OFFERED BY:

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

Date: 03/21/2018
Time: 02:30 PM
Location: 309
Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HCR 186 URGING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS TO BE EDUCATED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF HEAVY BACKPACKS AND TO TAKE PROACTIVE MEASURES TO AVOID INJURY.

**Purpose of
Resolution:**

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports HCR 186, which urges educators and families to be knowledgeable about heavy backpacks' potential health impacts and how to proactively avoid injury.

Presently, scoliosis checks are performed when students first enter school, and again at 7th grade when they undergo physical exams conducted by a licensed Medical Doctor (M.D.), Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.), Naturopathic Doctor (ND), Physician Assistant (P.A.), or Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HCR 186.

The Hawaii State Department of Education seeks to advance the goals of the Strategic Plan which is focused on student success, staff success, and successful systems of support. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.

HCR-186

Submitted on: 3/19/2018 2:34:49 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/21/2018 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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TESTIMONY