

MAR 08 2018

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# SENATE 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

4  
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

9  
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

13  
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

18  
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

22  
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

26  
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 Senate of the Twenty-ninth  
16 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018, the  
17 House of Representatives concurring, that all school  
18 administrators, teachers, parents, and students are strongly  
19 urged to be educated about the potential health impacts of heavy  
20 backpacks and to take proactive measures to avoid injury; and

21

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

26

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;

40



- 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.

29  
 30  
 31 

OFFERED BY: Michael D. Sidani

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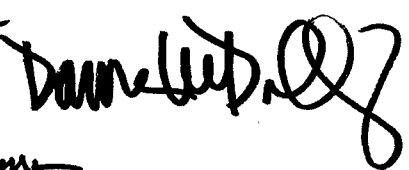
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STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 04/13/2018  
**Time:** 02:00 PM  
**Location:** 309  
**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Resolution:** SCR 069 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 SCR 069, with a requested amendment.

The primary focus of this measure is for educators and families to be knowledgeable about heavy backpacks' potential health impacts and how to be proactive in avoiding injury.

However, on Page 2, Lines 22-25, the Department respectfully requests this following language be stricken from the proposal:

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education is urged to develop policies and procedures to allow licensed chiropractors to conduct interval scoliosis examinations on children in school"

Presently, scoliosis checks are performed when students first enter school, and again at 7<sup>th</sup> 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).

Heavy backpacks do not cause scoliosis. The inclusion of scoliosis does not align with the focus of the resolution which is heightening awareness and educating our school community about the health impacts of heavy backpacks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 069.

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](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).

**SCR-69**

Submitted on: 4/12/2018 2:06:38 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/13/2018 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	Oahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

To the Honorable Justin H. Woodson, Chair; the Honorable Sam Satoru Kong, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee on Education:

Good afternoon. My name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **SCR69** relating to potential health impacts of heavy backpacks.

The OCC on Legislative Priorities is in favor of **SCR69** and strongly supports its adoption.

**SCR69** is in accord with the Democratic Platform as it urges that all school administrators, teachers, parents, and students are strongly be educated about the potential health impacts of heavy backpacks and to take proactive measures to avoid injury.

The DPH Platform states that "We believe that the future of our state as well as our country depends upon an educated and knowledgeable citizenry. We support the prioritization of our resources toward providing quality public education and library services to every student, regardless of learning capacity or ability to pay, in an environment conducive to the learning process. These resources shall be made available at every level, from pre-school through higher education, including life-long learning. Educational facilities must be maintained, renovated and built to 21st century innovations so that our students learn in well-designed, safe environments." (Platform of the DPH, P.6, Lines 296-302 (2016)).

Given that **SCR69** urges that all school administrators, teachers, parents, and students are strongly be educated about the potential health impacts of heavy backpacks and to take proactive measures to avoid injury, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to strongly support its adoption.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.  
Sincerely yours,

/s/ Melodie Aduja  
Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee  
Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Text/tel.: (808) 258-8889