

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2304

Honolulu, Hawaii

JAN 31 2020

RE: S.B. No. 2264

S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirtieth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2020  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 2264 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL LUNCH REFORM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Increase the number of days by which students have to apply for free or reduced lunch and to replenish the student's meal fund;
- (2) Require the Department of Education to report to the Legislature regarding the number of students who are denied meals based on the inability to pay;
- (3) Prohibit schools from stigmatizing a student due to inability to pay; and
- (4) Appropriate funds to the special school lunch fund.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Education, Hawaii State Teachers Association, Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, Democratic Party of Hawaii Education Caucus, Blue Zones Project Hawaii, Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!, and eight private individuals.



Your Committee finds that Hawaii's poverty rate is ranked eighth lowest in the nation. However, when using a method of measuring poverty developed by the Census Bureau, which considers cost of living, Hawaii's ranking moves to thirteenth highest in the nation. Accordingly, over seventy thousand public school students eat free or reduced-priced meals in the State. Forty-seven percent of Hawaii's public school students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program, and that number has risen by twenty percent since 2007. Testimony received by your Committee indicated that in 2017, over one hundred students were denied a meal due to an inability to pay, and the figure was likely much higher as fewer than thirty percent of schools responded to the survey.

Your Committee further finds that under existing law, the grace period for families to pay for school meals at the beginning of the school year is twenty-one days, while the grace period for replenishing the student's meal fund account when it reaches zero or a negative balance is seven days. Your Committee additionally finds that extending the grace periods would significantly reduce the frequency of students being denied a school meal due to inability to pay. To increase protections for families and students in this situation, your Committee finds that schools should be prohibited from stigmatizing students for their families' inability to timely pay for school meals.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Adding language that prohibits a school from serving an alternative meal to students who are unable to pay; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2264, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2264, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Education,



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MICHELLE N. KIDANI, Chair



