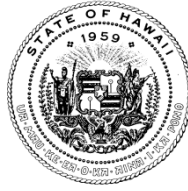


DAVID Y. IGE
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TESTIMONY BY:

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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March 23, 2022
11:05 A.M.

State Capitol, Conference Room 423/Teleconference

H.C.R. 125
REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE
DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION AND EDUCATION

House Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** H.C.R. 125, which requests that an Auditor conduct a performance audit of the Drivers Education Program administered by the DOT.

The Drivers Education Program is critically important as it promotes safe driving and drivers and contributes to safety on our transportation system. Like many other programs, this was not immune to the impacts of the pandemic conditions. The DOT expects that a performance audit will help both our department and the Department of Education identify ways to address the current backlog and improve the overall program to be more effective and efficient.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
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Date: 03/23/2022

Time: 11:05 AM

Location: 423 Via Videoconference

Committee: House Transportation

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HCR 0125 REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION AND EDUCATION.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HCR 125. The Department's Driver Education student program falls under the administration of the State Department of Transportation (DOT). In school year 2019-20, approximately 1,600 students completed the driver education program. In the 2020-21 school year, 2,226 students completed the program. Prior to the pandemic, the Department enrolled and serviced between 4,200 and 4,500 students in a school year.

The Department's Driver Education classes were suspended from March 2020. The DOT provided guidelines to reinstate the program in Fall 2020. The guidelines included adding virtual classes that were vetted and approved by the DOT. Virtual classes were limited to 14 students compared to the previous face-to-face class size of 30 students in a class. During this same period, face-to-face classes were also allowed limited to 10 students. In February 2022, the DOT rescinded the limit of 10 students for face-to-face classes provided the social distancing requirement in the classroom was followed.

The effect of the pandemic was the major factor in limiting driver education for the public school students statewide. This included 8 driver education instructors exiting the program due to the risk of infection from the virus (2 on Maui, 6 on Oahu). The loss of the 8 instructors combined with the restrictions on continuing classes and size of classes added to the longer waitlist for students to complete driver education courses at the Departments high schools.

Kapaa High will be offering driver education classes next school year as an elective course during the school day. The classes will accommodate 60 students a semester. Instructors from both Kapaa High and Kauai High will combine to provide behind the wheel hours of training for these students.

Finally, the Department has certified 16 new instructors in the last two years and has 10 teachers on a waitlist to be trained. However, the Department is unable to proceed with the training due to new requirements by the DOT. The Department had 11 trainers (1 Kauai, 1 Maui, 3 Hawaii, and 6 Oahu) but only one of the 11 has been deemed qualified as a trainer of instructors under the new requirements instituted by the DOT. The new requirements have made it more difficult for the Department to make up for the backlog of students in the program caused by the pandemic but we are having continued dialogue with DOT on how best to work with the new requirements.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 125.