
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONTRACT WITH A
QUALIFIED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION TO ESTABLISH AN AQUATIC
SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

1 WHEREAS, drowning is a tragic but preventable cause of
2 injury and death in the State, especially among children; and
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4 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health, drowning
5 was the leading cause of injury-related mortality for Hawaii's
6 children between 2014 and 2018; and
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8 WHEREAS, more children died by drowning than in motor
9 vehicle and pedestrian accidents combined, and an alarmingly
10 large proportion of those child drownings were among resident
11 children; and
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13 WHEREAS, during the same period, there were an annual
14 average of seventy non-fatal child drowning incidents attended
15 by emergency medical services; and
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17 WHEREAS, although individuals who experience non-fatal
18 drowning incidents escape with their lives, some are left with
19 severe brain damage and may face long-term disabilities such as
20 memory problems, learning disabilities, or permanent losses of
21 basic functions, a disorder often referred to as a persistent
22 vegetative state; and
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24 WHEREAS, many drowning deaths could be prevented through
25 aquatic safety education programs; and
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27 WHEREAS, the International Life Saving Federation's
28 Position Statement for Swimming and Safety Education recommends
29 that everyone have access to training in water safety, personal
30 survival, and water rescue; and
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1 WHEREAS, the International Life Saving Federation
2 recommends that this training be available to everyone
3 regardless of ability and background and should commence at the
4 earliest possible age; and

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6 WHEREAS, despite these recommendations, many of Hawaii's
7 youth do not have the opportunity to receive aquatic safety
8 instruction; and

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10 WHEREAS, less than ten percent of public and public charter
11 elementary schools integrate aquatic safety education into their
12 physical education curricula; and

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14 WHEREAS, outside of schools, municipal aquatic safety
15 programs lack the resources to meet public demand, and the cost
16 of obtaining private lessons is often cost-prohibitive for many
17 local families; and

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19 WHEREAS, as a result, many children are inadequately
20 prepared for water-related emergencies; and

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22 WHEREAS, an assessment of Hawaii students conducted by the
23 Hawaii Aquatics Academy during the 2018-2019 school year found
24 that only thirty-one percent of participating students could
25 swim for twenty-five yards, only twelve percent could float for
26 thirty seconds, and only thirteen percent could tread water for
27 sixty seconds; and

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29 WHEREAS, all children should be provided equal access to
30 standards-based aquatic safety education programs; and

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32 WHEREAS, to achieve this, aquatic safety education should
33 be integrated into the health and physical education curricula
34 of public schools; and

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36 WHEREAS, providing proper training in water safety,
37 personal survival, and water rescue will help to ensure that the
38 State's youth, especially those from low- and moderate-income
39 communities, know how to avoid and recover from hazardous
40 aquatic situations; now, therefore,
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1 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
2 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
3 Session of 2023, that the Department of Education is requested
4 to contract with a qualified nonprofit organization to establish
5 an aquatic safety education program; and

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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this aquatic safety education
8 program be offered to elementary school students during regular
9 school hours; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
12 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the
13 Board of Education, and Superintendent of Education.

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OFFERED BY:



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