

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 14, 2024

RE: H.B. No. 1837
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Education and Water & Land, to which was referred H.B. No. 1837 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require:

- (1) The Department of Education to grant public access to emergency action plans that do not pose a security risk to students, staff, or guests of school campuses;
- (2) Each Department of Education school to have a comprehensive school evacuation communication plan for use during emergencies; and
- (3) The Department of Education to collaborate with the Department of Transportation to assess all Department of Education school campuses to determine if there are sufficient emergency evacuation routes for each campus.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities; one member of the Maui County Council; Hawai'i State Teachers Association; Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus; Hawai'i Youth Services Network; and one



individual. Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of Education and Office of Language Access.

Your Committees find that this measure adopts a recommendation of the House of Representatives Schools Working Group, which was established following the Maui wildfires in August 2023 with the task of evaluating strategies utilized to accommodate displaced students and staff to return to school. Your Committees further finds that, although the fires did not occur while students were on campus, the physical devastation and loss of life resulting from the wildfires reveals the urgency of ensuring that each of the State's public schools are prepared to manage future emergencies. Your Committees believe that proactive planning is essential in implementing school safety protocols.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that each school's evacuation communication plan shall include cultural awareness and responsiveness to language access needs of the community;
- (2) Inserting an appropriation to the Department of Education for the creation of emergency action plans and establishment and implementation of a comprehensive evacuation communication plan for each Department of Education school;
- (3) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Education and Water & Land that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1837, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1837, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Education and
Water & Land,


LINDA ICHIYAMA, Chair


JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



