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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Native Hawaiians,  
2 Pacific Islanders, and other people of color have  
3 disproportionately high rates of suicide. Suicide rates and  
4 suicide attempts are also disproportionately high among the  
5 State's youth. According to the department of health, between  
6 2005 and 2013, up to twenty per cent of high school-aged  
7 children in Hawaii had suicidal ideation. Suicide is the fourth  
8 leading cause of death for children between the ages of ten and  
9 fourteen and the leading cause of death for young people between  
10 the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. The State's hospitals also  
11 see hundreds of patients per year having self-inflicted  
12 injuries, and more than twenty per cent of these are under the  
13 age of eighteen.

14           The legislature recognizes that these numbers illustrate  
15 the need for additional specialists to provide mental health  
16 services in the State's schools. Students in Hawaii may be  
17 experiencing trauma, grief, family separation, depression, and



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1 other crises, and many school counseling offices are  
 2 short-staffed. Other school counseling offices are staffed by  
 3 social workers, who may lack the expertise and specialized  
 4 training to address mental health concerns.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate  
 6 moneys to hire school-based youth mental health specialists for  
 7 the State's public schools.

8 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
 9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
 10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the  
 11 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
 12 2024-2025 to hire school-based youth mental health specialists  
 13 for department of education schools.

14 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
 15 of education for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

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INTRODUCED BY:

  
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JAN 20 2023



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**Report Title:**

DOE; Youth Mental Health Services; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates moneys to hire school-based youth mental health specialists for Hawaii Department of Education schools.

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