

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1575-24

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 01, 2024

RE: H.R. No. 171

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

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.R. No. 171 entitled:

"HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF CANCELLED SCHOOL BUS SERVICE ROUTES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to urge the Department of Education to develop a comprehensive plan for the reinstatement of cancelled school bus service routes.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Pearl City Neighborhood Board and four individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from one individual.

Your Committee finds that the availability of school bus services is essential to student attendance, especially for families who live in rural and remote areas and students who come from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. Your Committee further finds that the Department of Education provides bus services in neighborhoods across the State to ensure broad access to educational opportunities for Hawaii's students, serving approximately twelve thousand student riders on Oahu and thirteen thousand student riders on the neighbor islands.

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Your Committee notes that, currently, there is a nationwide shortage of school bus drivers. Due to the shortage of qualified school bus drivers in the State, student bus transportation services have been completely or partially suspended at ten Oahu high schools and four schools on Kauai in the 2023-2024 school year. Suspensions of additional school bus service routes in other counties of Hawaii are anticipated if the shortage of qualified school bus drivers continues. Your Committee believes that a comprehensive plan to reinstate previously cancelled school bus service routes is needed to ensure that all students in the State are able to use school bus services to arrive at public schools on time.

Your Committee further notes that the Department of Education stated in its testimony that the comprehensive plan could encompass the consideration of alternative transportation options such as carpooling and public transit in addition to school bus transportation, and could also include the examination of efficiency strategies such as centralized bus stops.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.R. No. 171 and recommends its adoption.

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

for Justin H. Woodson
JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



