

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

**LATE**

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/21/2024

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Resolution** HCR 0191 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A  
:  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF CANCELLED  
SCHOOL BUS SERVICE ROUTES.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) is providing comments on HCR 191.

The school bus driver shortage has been widely publicized, and is part of a greater nationwide driver shortage that is only expected to increase in scope over the coming years. As the reasons for the driver shortage are varied and complex, the solutions to ensuring safe, reliable transportation for the Department's students are likewise varied, and not limited to school buses.

The Department accordingly proposes that the comprehensive plan proposed by HCR 191 take a broader approach beyond the reinstatement of canceled school bus routes. Accordingly, 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

TESTIMONY OF  
**LARRY S VERAY**

TO THE COMMITTEE'S ON EDUCATION AND TRANSPORTATION

**IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HCR 191 / HR 171**

**RELATED TO SCHOOL BUS SERVICES**

**March 19, 2024**

Aloha, Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica and Committee members. I am Larry Veray, Chairman for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21. I am submitting this testimony representing our board as a whole and families that live in Pearl City that require bus service for their children. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HCR 191 / HR 171.

The members of the Pearl City Neighborhood Board in their individual capacities strongly support this measure that would establish comprehensive standards for the department of education related to school bus services to ensure reasonable accommodation, equitable access, timely communication, and accountability. The need for this bill was demonstrated by the elimination, on just weeks' notice at the start of the 2023 – 2024 school year, of school bus routes serving Pearl City High School and Highlands Intermediate School without community consultation.

In particular, we note the bill's requirements for consultation with community representatives on the details in a timely manner and decisions to be made on data, equity and alternative options with an appeal process. Given reasonable planning there might have been, for example, minor adjustments to city's TheBus schedules and routes to have provided better service options. In addition, community consultation could have sooner provided school bus service by shared by different levels of school as happens throughout rural America, including Hawaii and Oahu.

The nine comprehensive standards will ensure, as the bill states, school bus service “. . . decisions are made with the utmost consideration for reasonable accommodation, equity, and prioritization of student who live beyond a certain distance from school.”

We most strongly urge you to pass HRC 191 / HR 171. Our keiki in Pearl City should not be forgotten and forced to walk long distances especially up a hill to their school. Mahalo!

*Larry S. Veray*

**LATE**

**HCR-191**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 4:24:37 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lourdes Vergara Marcelo	Lou's Quality Home Health Care Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HCR 191 / 171 : Reinstatement of Cancelled School Bus Services to canceled routes .

A lot of school children rely on the school bus services .Both their parents , most likely have left the house early to catch the public transportation to be at their work places on time or left early to go to work to beat the OAHU's traffic.. The school children has to take the bus to school to be on time , place their heavy school backpacks in the locker rooms and be on time for the first period. Had the school busses not there , then they have to walk , perhaps avoid the barking dogs in the neighborhoods , meet strangers or homeless people on the street , harassing them etc. By the time they reached the school grounds they have had encountered a lot of unpleasant experiences . Yet we now expect these young students to give 100 % concentrations to their instructors or listen to lectures, when at the back of their minds that they will take the same route going home , the mean barking dogs, homeless folks in the corner of the street etc. I believe , as a tax payer , we need to protect our young generations and set them up for success . Please reinstate the cancelled bus services to routes that has been canceled. Protect our children , ensure that when they reached the school they are ready to learn and will be on time as the bus services are punctual .

Thank you .

Lourdes Vergra Marcelo, RN

Mother of 4 children

**HCR-191**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 7:22:28 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am not sure that a comprehensive plan as proposed by this Resolution would be sufficient, unless it specially addressed the issue of shortage of bus drivers, the essential cause for the cutback of school bus services. It may be more appropriate to call on the Dept of Labor and Industrial Relations to come up with a comprehensive plan to address the shortage of school bus drivers.

**HCR-191**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 8:43:45 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tony Velasco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, am in support of the reinstatement of the cancelled school bus. The students of Pearl City High School will benefit from the school bus as they will be not late to school and encourage them and help with their studies.

**HCR-191**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 9:59:21 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Candace Vizcarra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Praying for GOD's hand over this matter

**HCR-191**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 11:48:09 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

As the grandfather of school bus-eligible public school students in Pearl City, I support HCR191 and HR171. The Department of Education does need comprehensive plans to provide busing for students.

Furthermore, these plans should be made in consultation with parents, the communities, and county bus systems. We want to avoid “last week” changes to, and dropping of, routes as happened at the start of the 2023-2024 school year.

And as a related matter, Leeward Community College should be encouraged to accelerate the inclusion of school bus driver training in its existing Commercial Driver License program.

Please pass the resolutions.

Mahalo,

Dan Smith

**LATE**

**HCR-191**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 2:49:56 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I strongly encourage the legislators to pass HCR 191/HR 171.**

**As a parent of an 8th grader at Mililani Middle school. We were one of lucky families that still have bus service this school year. However, for many other families statewide there was no option to catch the bus and only being notified weeks before the school year started.**

**We all know that the cost of living in Hawaii isn't ideal. Multi generational homes have become the new norm. Residents have to work multiple jobs or pick-up extra shifts to make ends meet. Most households both parents have jobs. Therefore, having a school bus service would ensure students can get to school on time, while also ensuring parents are able to go to work. Especially in the rural areas of the state where there's only one school for miles.**

**My family and I live at home with my parents and brother. The cost to purchase our own property just isn't feasible. But we still pay to live there. My husband and I both have full time- jobs that have rotating shifts (shifts vary week to week). My husband and I sometimes work as early as 3am. So when they announced the cancellation of bus service due to a shortage of drivers weeks before the start of school I panicked. Yes, my parents are retired, but they're also getting older in age and I can't always rely on having someone drive my son to school. Having school bus service helped to ensure my son always has a way to get to school on time and a way home from school. Having school bus service also allowed my husband and I to continue to work. It also allowed me to get a promotion at work. We're one of the lucky ones. Some households where they don't have any support. Therefore, if there's no bus service they're left with no choice to physically drive their child/children to school and hopefully their work schedule will accomodate it.**

**Having bus service will also help to alleviate traffic congestion in the school zones. Mililani Mauka has 2 elementary schools and a middle school. Mililani Mauka also only has one way in and out from that community. Therefore, restoring bus service would alleviate traffic congestion going in and out of Mililani Mauka. Currently, students within Mililani Mauka lost bus service to the middle school and Mililani High has no bus service. Therefore, the traffic going into and coming out of Mililani Mauka is a lot heavier. In rare cases when I drop my son off it takes me almost 30-45 minutes round trip due to the increased amount of traffic going to and from the schools.**





**LATE**

**HCR-191**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 4:20:45 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charmaine Doran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! A special mahalo to Rep. Trish LaChica for continuing to pursue the reinstatement of bus routes.

School buses represent the largest mass transit in our nation. Mass transit is a mandate nationwide. The State and the City have made commitments to construct mass transit to facilitate multi-mode streets and land use planning.

And yet the DOE is moving and working in the opposite direction of this transportation policy by unceremoniously cancelling bus routes.

The reward for our steadfast support of rail, cannot be less service where it counts most - our kids.

The state cannot simply switch the burden of school riders to property taxes.

City mass transit is heavily subsidized by property taxes. The public should have a say on whether I should be expected to do more with my property taxes. The DOE may think there is no harm. But this a unilateral decision by DOE impacting parents, kids and tax money.

The DOE is creating transportation policy in a vacuum.

This should never be allowed.

It is also unfair and inequitable for the DOE to provide less - by canceling bus service while asking for record levels of pay for its highest administrators. In truth, it is unconscionable.

please work to address these errors & hold the State DOE accountable to the people.