

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 12:48:35 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Melody Young	Testifying for CARES	Support	In Person

Comments:

CARES testifies in strong support.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

SCR65

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REQUIRE ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT SERVE MEALS TO OFFER PLANT-BASED MEAL OPTIONS PRIORITIZING INGREDIENTS FROM LOCALLY SOURCED AND LOCALLY FARMED PRODUCTS.

Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 3:01PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Chairs Kidani and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kim and Richards, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **opposes SCR65** urging the Department of Education to require all public schools and charter schools that serve meals to offer plant-based meal options prioritizing ingredients from locally sources and locally farmed products.

We believe that individuals should have the freedom to choose their diet based on their specific needs and values, but a well-rounded meal that includes beef is still a healthy choice. While it is important to focus on how to increase consumption of locally purchased products, requiring all schools to serve plant-based meals is not necessary. We are still trying to streamline and improve the process for schools to purchase local products, and adding this requirement of offering plant-based meal options will not help those issues. Let's focus on increasing local food purchasing, including beef which is a high quality protein that Hawaii's ranchers are able to provide to schools.

Advancing Food Security

With cattle consistently in the top 5 agricultural commodities in the state, beef is incredibly important to advancing Hawaii's food security. Hawaii's paniolo have endured generations of challenges, and while the pineapple and sugar industries faltered, the cattle industry continues to steward tracts of land and find innovative ways to stay in business. We encourage the State to look to Hawaii's ranchers as partners in increasing food security, such as continuing to provide beef for the Farm to School program and as a resource for reducing fire fuel loads.

Nutrition

The American Heart Association recognizes beef as a heart healthy protein and even provides recipes that include lean beef. Research by Roussell et al (2012) shows eating lean beef as part of a heart-healthy dietary pattern can help maintain normal cholesterol levels. Hawaii's locally grown beef



provides 10 essential nutrients in a single 3 oz. serving. This includes high-quality protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins. The iron in beef is heme iron, which is more easily absorbed than nonheme iron, which is the main form of iron found in plant proteins. Iron is vital as it helps red blood cells carry oxygen to body tissue, but even further, it also plays an important role in cognitive health such as memory, learning, and reasoning.

Environmental Stewardship

If we encourage individuals not to choose beef, some of our most avid land stewards will suffer. Ranchers are stewards of the land and are key in removing invasive species, reducing fire fuel loads, and increasing carbon sequestration through rotational grazing (Bremer et al., 2021). Beef raised in the US has one of the lowest carbon footprints in the world, and according to the Environmental Protection Agency, cattle are responsible for just 2% of greenhouse gas emissions in the US, with the full lifecycle of raising cattle accounting for 3.7% of greenhouse gas emissions (Rotz et al., 2019). This improvement in production is a result of research in genetics, the quality of cattle feeds, animal welfare and management techniques, and the inclusion of technology.

Since almost 20% of Hawaii's land is in pasture (with that number dropping each year due to conversions to other uses), we should not be discouraging the consumption of local beef.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director

Sources Cited

Bremer, L. L., Nathan, N., Trauernicht, C., Pascua, P., Krueger, N., Jokiel, J., Barton, J., & Daily, G. C. (2021). Maintaining the Many Societal Benefits of Rangelands: The Case of Hawai'i. *Land*, 10(7), Article 7.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/land10070764>

Rotz, C. A., Asem-Hiablie, S., Place, S., & Thoma, G. (2019). Environmental footprints of beef cattle production in the United States. *Agricultural Systems*, 169, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2018.11.005>

Roussell, M. A., Hill, A. M., Gaugler, T. L., West, S. G., Heuvel, J. P. V., Alaupovic, P., Gillies, P. J., & Kris-Etherton, P. M. (2012). Beef in an Optimal Lean Diet study: Effects on lipids, lipoproteins, and apolipoproteins. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 95(1), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.111.016261>

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/24/2024 10:14:45 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Testifying for Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are grateful to those senators who sponsored SR65 and urge its passage.

Mahalo!



March 26, 2024

Senator Mike Gabbard
201 State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI. 96813

Dear Senator Gabbard:

Re: SR 65 – Schools Plant Based Meals – Support

The Church State Council is the oldest public interest advocacy and legal services organization in the Western United States devoted exclusively to issues of liberty of conscience and religion and the separation of church and state. We are a Seventh-day Adventist organization serving a five-state western region (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada & Utah) for the Adventist Church. We are writing this letter of support for SR 65.

The Church State Council supports legislation that helps to bring about equality. All Americans are entitled to the fundamental rights of conscience, religious freedom and the pursuit of happiness.

The Seventh-day Adventist church since its inception has promoted a dietary pattern based on the biblical Book of Leviticus. It emphasizes whole plant foods, such as legumes, fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains, and discourages the consumption of animal products as much as possible.

Many health benefits are associated with this way of eating. In fact, research has shown that plant-based Adventists often experience a lower risk of many chronic diseases and many also enjoy a longer life.

Food plays a vital role in preparing children and students to learn and make sure they are healthy enough to attend school. Nutrition impacts brain development, memory and cognitive function, energy, attention and focus, which are all critical to the ability to absorb and retain information.

We have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our young vulnerable citizens. Effective laws protect everyone.

Thank you for your important work in authoring this measure.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dennis Seaton'.

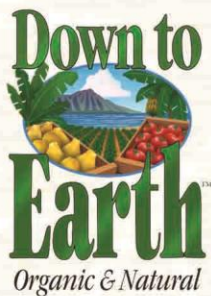
Dennis Seaton
Director of Government Relations

W W W . C H U R C H S T A T E . O R G

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Love Life!



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SCR78/SR65

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REQUIRE ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT SERVE MEALS TO OFFER PLANT-BASED MEAL OPTIONS PRIORITIZING INGREDIENTS FROM LOCALLY SOURCED AND LOCALLY FARMED PRODUCTS.

Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment &

Senate Committee on Education

March 27, 2024, 3:00pm State Capitol

Aloha Sen. Mike Gabbard, AEN Chair, Sen. Tim Richards, AEN Vice Chair, Sen. Michelle Kidani, EDU Chair, Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, EDU Vice Chair, and AEN/EDU Committee Members.

Down to Earth Organic and Natural testifies in support of SCR78/SR65.

Down to Earth Organic and Natural has six locations on Oahu and Maui. Since we opened in 1977, we have supported healthy lifestyles and preservation of the environment by selling local, fresh, organic and natural products, and by promoting a healthy, plant-based and vegetarian lifestyle.

We are strongly in support of SCR78/SR65 urging the Department of Education to require all public schools and charter schools that serve meals to offer plant-based meal options prioritizing ingredients from locally sourced and locally farmed products.

A 2020 *Nutrients* systematic review concluded that consuming five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables is linked to better mental health, particularly less depression. According to recent scientific studies, for example a 2021 study published in *Advances in Nutrition*, eating a vegetarian diet can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes. Plant-based diets improve insulin sensitivity, help with weight management, and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. As you know, diabetes is a serious concern in Hawaii; over 11% of the population has been diagnosed with diabetes and an additional 39,000 are estimated to have the disease but have not been diagnosed yet (American Diabetes Association, 2021). Diagnosed diabetes costs an estimated \$1.5 billion in Hawaii each year.

The benefits of plant-based meals in our schools from locally sourced ingredients are keeping more funds in our economy, supporting our local farmers and producers, encouraging schools to use more fresh ingredients containing less preservatives in school lunches, and providing plant-based meal options to increase the fruit and vegetable component of our keiki's diets while adding to their understanding of how to eat healthy. Everyone can agree that getting more fruits and vegetables into the diets of our keiki is highly beneficial. By allowing our youth the opportunity to try plant-based meals (which they may not be exposed to at home), they are more likely to consider eating a diverse diet containing more fruits and vegetables for the betterment of their physical and mental health now and in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

Alison Riggs
Public Policy & Government Relations Manager
Down to Earth
2525 S. King St., Suite 309
Honolulu, HI 96826
Phone (808) 824-3240/ E-mail: alison.riggs@downtoearth.org

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/22/2024 6:27:35 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill as it helps not only the kids to eat healthy and local but our helps our farmers. This is a fantastic proposal and leaders would be foolish to not pass it as it would serve the community all around

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 3:51:14 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Faccenda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure as plant based meals are often cheaper than meat based meals, and just as healthy. If these meals can be produced from locally grown food, that is an obvious benefit as well.

Thank you,

Kevin Faccenda

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 2:54:23 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gordon LaBedz, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our country is in the midst of a pandemic of obesity, heart disease and cancer. Nothing is more important than to teach our children good eating habits. This Bill would move that process ever so slightly forward.

Thank you for your support and concern for our kid's future.

Gordon LaBedz, MD

Family Physician

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 2:10:56 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to:- Incorporating locally sourced and locally farmed ingredients into school meals will also support the State's agricultural industry, help fund local jobs, and potentially enhance the nutritional quality of meals through the use of fresher ingredients;

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 10:17:50 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristi Desaucido	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Bill 78 SCR because it advocates for inclusivity, sustainability, and health in our school meal programs. By requiring all public and charter schools to offer plant-based meal options, this measure ensures that all students, regardless of their dietary restrictions or preferences, have access to nutritious meals. Additionally, prioritizing ingredients from locally sourced and farmed products supports our local agriculture, reduces environmental impact, and fosters a connection between students and their community's natural resources. This bill aligns with values of healthy living, environmental responsibility, and economic support for local farmers, making it a comprehensive approach to improving our education system's meal offerings.

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 11:45:10 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

GOOD FOR LOCAL FARMERS.

MAHALO!

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 1:40:05 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Skow, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha everyone!

As a physician on Kauai, I **strongly support SR65,**

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REQUIRE ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT SERVE MEALS TO OFFER PLANT-BASED MEAL OPTIONS PRIORITIZING INGREDIENTS FROM LOCALLY SOURCED AND LOCALLY FARMED PRODUCTS.

Fortunately, we have examples across the country of plant-based school lunches; so we will not have to reinvent the wheel, we'll just modify our plant based lunches with locally grown plant protein and produce, maybe the locally made **Braddah Dave's Taro Burger**. (From Kauai)!

Here's what Santa Barbara schools are doing. Also, as an FYI, all public schools in Illinois are offering plant-based meals to all 2 million students, so is DC, and LA and NYC. Back to Santa Barbara:

"SBUSD serves a plant-based option at each meal. Options include **plant-based chili, rojo burritos, Thai green curry bowls, vegan "meatball" subs, and veggie pozole**. Of the 2 million meals SBUSD serves every year, approximately 50 percent of the meals are vegan. The plant-based options often sell out more quickly than the meat-based meals! SBUSD is also home to many school gardens, where students learn about the benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables."

And the health benefits to the kids: per PCRM, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine:

Plant-based meals provide excellent nutrition—they are rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that boost students' health. Children who are raised on healthful vegan diets have a reduced risk for heart disease, cancer, obesity, diabetes, and other conditions. Adolescents raised on a plant-based diet often find they have an easier time maintaining a healthy weight. **They also have fewer problems with acne, allergies, and gastrointestinal problems than their peers who eat animal products.**

Plant-based school meals can also help address rising rates of chronic disease. **Projections from the CDC show that 1 in 3 children will develop type 2 diabetes during their lifetime.** More

and more children are gaining excess weight, paving the way for health problems later in life. Twenty-five percent of children ages 5 to 10 years have high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, or other early warning signs of heart disease. In fact, American children often have fatty streaks in their arteries before they finish high school. Plant-based meals promote health, because they are free of cholesterol, low in saturated fat, and full of fiber, and protein.

And of course, plant-based eating is the easiest change we can make for the environment, per the UN, animal agriculture contributes to more greenhouse gas emissions than all planes, trains, cars, trucks, ships combined. And animal agriculture is the major contributor to pollution of our ocean, rivers, streams; and commercial fishing is depleting our oceans.

And lastly, plant-based eating is kind to all, our animals, our planet, and our health. Choose Kindness!

Thank you for your consideration and time. Have a great rest of your week!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Skow, MD

Kauai, HI

stephanieskow@yahoo.com

SR-65

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 1:52:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
katherine skow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SR65, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REQUIRE ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT SERVE MEALS TO OFFER PLANT-BASED MEAL OPTIONS PRIORITIZING INGREDIENTS FROM LOCALLY SOURCED AND LOCALLY FARMED PRODUCTS.

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Here's what Santa Barbara schools are doing.

"SBUSD serves a plant-based option at each meal. Options include plant-based chili, rojo burritos, Thai green curry bowls, vegan "meatball" subs, and veggie pozole. Of the 2 million meals SBUSD serves every year, approximately 50 percent of the meals are vegan. The plant-based options often sell out more quickly than the meat-based meals! SBUSD is also home to many school gardens, where students learn about the benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables."

In addition, all public schools in Illinois are offering plant-based meals to all 2 million students, as well as DC, and LA and NYC.

Plant-based meals provide excellent nutrition—they are rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that boost students' health. Children who are raised on healthful vegan diets have a reduced risk for heart disease, cancer, obesity, diabetes, and other conditions. Adolescents raised on a plant-based diet often find they have an easier time maintaining a healthy weight. **They also have fewer problems with acne, allergies, and gastrointestinal problems than their peers who eat animal products.**

Plant-based school meals can also help address rising rates of chronic disease. **Projections from the CDC show that 1 in 3 children will develop type 2 diabetes during their lifetime.** More and more children are gaining excess weight, paving the way for health problems later in life. Twenty-five percent of children ages 5 to 10 years have high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, or other early warning signs of heart disease. In fact, American children often have fatty streaks in their arteries before they finish high school. Plant-based meals promote health, because they are free of cholesterol, low in saturated fat, and full of fiber, and protein.

And lastly, plant-based eating is kind to all: our animals, our planet, and our health. Choose Kindness!

Mahalo,

Katherine Skow