

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1338

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 18 , 2025

RE: S.B. No. 1300
S.D. 1
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 1300, S.D. 1, entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Department of Education to adopt administrative rules to provide a lower rate or free meals to students based on their economic need; and
- (2) Appropriate funds for meal subsidies for students whose families are classified as asset-limited, income-constrained, employed households.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission; Office of the Mayor of Maui County; one member of the Kaua'i County Council; Department of Research and Development of the County of Hawai'i; Hawai'i State Teachers Association; Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice; Catholic Charities Hawai'i; Pride at Work - Hawai'i; Hawai'i Youth Services Network; Hawaii Food Industry Association; Hawai'i Public Health Institute; Healthy Eating, Active Living Coalition; Green Party of

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Hawai'i; Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus; Kauai Women's Caucus; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Church State Council; Pele Lani Farm LLC, Kulia I Ka nu'u Outreach Services; Parents and Children Together; Hawai'i Foodbank; Project Vision Hawai'i; Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center; Hawai'i Hunger Action Network; Hawai'i Farmers Union; Oahu Youth Action Board; AlohaCare; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Hawa'ii Alliance for Progressive Action; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received testimony in support of the intent of this measure from the Department of Education. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from one individual.

Your Committee finds that providing access to healthy meals for students is essential for the overall well-being of Hawaii's people. Your Committee further finds that the Department of Education currently provides free and reduced-price lunches for qualified students using federal reimbursements. However, some families are not able to qualify for the federal reimbursement despite having an economic need. This measure will provide the Department of Education with the necessary funding and support to subsidize school meals for these students.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language which would have required the Department of Education to adopt administrative rules to provide a lower rate or free meals to students based on their economic needs;
- (2) Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, requiring the Department of Education to provide free school meals to students who currently qualify for reduced-price lunch;
- (3) Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, requiring the Department of Education to provide free school meals to students whose family income is no more than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level;
- (4) Authorizing the Governor to modify the strict provisions of providing free school meals as required by this measure and report to the Legislature on any modifications;



- (5) Appropriating funds to the Department of Education to subsidize meal costs for students eligible for reduced price-meals and whose family income is no more than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level, rather than for students whose families are classified as asset limited, income constrained, employed households;
- (6) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider appropriating \$565,000 for fiscal year 2025-2026 for meal subsidies for students eligible for reduced-price meals.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1300, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1300, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

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


JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



