

A Bill for an Act Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Education for Food Services.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. This Act is recommended by the governor for immediate passage in accordance with article VII, section 9, of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

SECTION 2. The legislature finds that the department of education is required to provide meal service for its students and staff. The department provides approximately twenty thousand school breakfasts and eighty thousand school lunches on a daily basis to students and staff across the State. However, the department of education has accumulated a deficit of more than \$20,000,000 for its food service operations, which is largely due to inflationary cost increases. In the 2022-2023 school year, more than eighty per cent of the department's food costs increased by forty-two per cent, resulting in the need for additional funds.

The legislature further finds that for many students, a school meal is their only regular source of food for their growing bodies and minds. School meals are required to follow strict federal food safety and nutrition guidelines, which ensure quality meals. The department of education plays a vital role in the health and well-being of youth in the State's communities.

The legislature also finds that while students and staff are required to pay for their meals, Title I students are provided meals free of charge. However, because school meals are critical for student development, students are not denied meals due to a lack of payment.

Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to make an emergency appropriation to the department of education for its food service fiscal deficit and to continue to provide public school students with high-quality, nutritious meals.

SECTION 3. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii and sections 37-91 and 37-93, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2023-2024 has already been exceeded by \$1,033,839,854 or ten per cent. The appropriations contained in this Act will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2023-2024 to be further exceeded by \$20,000,000 or one per cent. This declaration takes into account the additional general fund appropriation(s) authorized for fiscal year 2023-2024 in this Act only. The reasons for exceeding the general fund expenditure ceiling are that:

- (1) The appropriations made in this Act are necessary to serve the public interest; and
- (2) The appropriations made in this Act meet the needs addressed by this Act.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$20,000,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 to provide funding for the department of education to cover its food service operations.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved June 19, 2024.)