

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

568

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 13

, 2025

RE: H.B. No. 288.

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 H.B. No. 288 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL BUS SERVICES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Authorize the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans for school bus services, provided certain conditions are met;
- (2) Authorize the Department of Education to create a staggered school start time program to mitigate the school bus driver shortage and increase the availability of student transportation for the 2025-2026 school year; and
- (3) Appropriate funds to the Department of Education:
 - (A) For the purchase of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans for school bus drivers; and
 - (B) To incentivize obtaining a commercial driver's license to increase the number of persons eligible to become school bus drivers.



Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice; Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization; and five individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Education and Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that the State is facing a severe bus driver shortage, resulting in the elimination of nearly eighty bus routes across the State. In response, the Governor issued an emergency proclamation to temporarily relax rules around the types of vehicles that can be used to safely transport students to and from school and around required driver certifications. Your Committee believes that codifying the Governor's emergency proclamation will allow for greater flexibility of school buses services and provide access for all students. Your Committee further finds that establishing a staggered school hours program will help mitigate the school bus driver shortage.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Authorizing the Department of Education to institute a staggered school hours program, rather than a staggered school start time program, in public schools to help make school bus services more available to students;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

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 H.B. No. 288, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 288, 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



