



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/10/2022

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 Via Videoconference

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: HB 1942 RELATING TO STUDENT TRANSPORTATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the department of education to establish a three-tiered student bus fare rate system to include a reduced bus fare rate for students and households that qualify for reduced lunch under the free and reduced price lunch program. Appropriates funds.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) provides comment on HB 1942. This bill would create significant implementation and logistical challenges at the state and school levels while providing minimal financial relief to Hawaii families.

Implementation of a three-tiered bus pass pricing structure would affect the Department with:

- 1) additional administrative time and costs for systems development and implementation;
- 2) reduced revenue from paid riders; and
- 3) need for additional funding to offset revenue loss.

At the school level, adding a three-tiered pricing structure causes a significant increase in workload to school staff due to the nature of how/when applications are received. Current policy allows families to retain their free/reduced meal status from the previous school year for the first 30 days of the new school year. Under this policy, student may not receive their bus pass until after the school year has begun.

Additionally, since all meals were free in the 2021-2022 school year, many families did not fill out the free and reduced meal applications leaving the Department with minimal relevant data to help launch and drive the initiative for schools as well as calculate the

financial implications to the Student Transportation Services Branch.

The Department requests time to investigate the projected return on investment for a program such as this without increasing the workload at the school level, especially for the remote and high poverty schools.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

HB-1942

Submitted on: 2/10/2022 9:20:45 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/10/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Keith Hayashi	Hawaii Department of Education	Comments	Yes

Comments:

Comments

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1942

February 10, 2022
2:00 p.m.
Room 309 and Videoconference

RELATING TO STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1942 amends Section 302A-406, HRS, to require the Department of Education to establish a three-tiered student bus fare rate system to include a reduced bus fare rate for students and households that qualify for reduced lunch under the free and reduced-price lunch program. The measure also appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds in FY 23 to carry out the purposes of this bill.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

**Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Education Committee**

Emily Evans, Individual
(808) 349-6109

February 10, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Re: HB1942 Relating to Student Transportation

I am testifying in opposition to HB1942 on the grounds that it does not go far enough to help Hawaii families. In all 49 states Student Transportation is free to state public schools. Hawaii should align itself with this national standard and provide families with free student transportation.

Below is the Department of Education's school bus pricing structure, which has not changed in 10+ years:

Type of bus pass	Full price
Coupons	\$10.00
Quarterly One-Way	\$36.00
Quarterly Roundtrip	\$72.00

The Department of Education's guidelines for free meals and milk and reduced price meals are obtained by multiplying the Federal income poverty guidelines by 1.30 and 1.85, respectively, and by rounding the result upward to the next whole dollar. If we apply this pricing structure to the current bus pass fees, the results are as follows:

Type of bus pass	Full price	Proposed reduced price
Coupons	\$10.00	\$6.00
Quarterly One-Way	\$36.00	\$19.00
Quarterly Roundtrip	\$72.00	\$39.00

Respectfully, please consider the following alternative methods of providing Hawaii families with genuine financial relief:

- 1) Align Hawaii with the rest of the nation and make Student Transportation free to eligible students attending DOE public schools;
- 2) Revise the bill to state that students who qualify for reduced meals, also qualify for a free bus pass. The cost savings for families are outlined here:

Type of bus pass	Full price	Proposed reduced price	Cost savings at proposed reduced status for families	Cost savings at free status for families
Quarterly One-Way	\$36.00	\$19.00	\$68.00 annually per student	\$144.00 annually per student
Quarterly Roundtrip	\$72.00	\$39.00	\$132.00 annually per student	\$288.00 annually per student

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Education Committee

Emily H. Evans, Individual
(808) 349-6109

February 10, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

Re: HB1942 Relating to Student Transportation

I am testifying in opposition to HB1942 on the grounds that it does not go far enough to help Hawaii families who are already struggling financially. In all other 49 states Student Transportation is free to public schools. Hawaii should align itself with this national standard and provide families with free student transportation.

A third tier pricing structure provides Hawaii families with minimal financial relief while imposing an increased workload on school staff. Respectfully, please consider the following alternatives:

- 1) Align Hawaii with the rest of the nation and make Student Transportation free to eligible students attending DOE public schools. The first step would be to ask the DOE how much revenue they make from the bus pass fares and what they do with those funds. With that information, please evaluate and consider providing DOE annual recurring funding instead so that Hawaii families will have access to free student transportation for all of Hawaii's public schools.
- 2) Revise the bill to state that students who qualify for reduced meals, qualify for a free bus pass.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

HB-1942

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 4:46:19 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/10/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Maggie Heard	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Good Day,

To get straight to the point, student transportation for the public school systems needs to be free to families. All other 49 states have a free bus system for getting their children to school. Hawaii should be no different. Our children education should be of the up most importance and a child unable to get to school simply because of means is unacceptable. Hawaii can and should do better.

thank you for your time.

HB-1942

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 9:09:56 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/10/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Rayni Nakamura-Watanabe	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Hawaii public school students who meet the State's eligibility requirements will significantly benefit from FREE transportation (as opposed to reduced-fare transportation proposed by this bill's three-tiered student bus fare rate system).

Some examples of the benefits of FREE transportation for public school students:

1. Reliable transportation which can result in increased and consistent classroom attendance;
2. Less vehicles on the road which can decrease traffic congestion, the likelihood of motor vehicle accidents, and vehicle emissions causing air pollution; and
3. More disposable income which can minimize stress for families and maximize access to other resources such as healthier food, better healthcare, and student participation in extracurricular activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Education Committee

Kana'ina Warren
Individual
(808) 429-9367

Wednesday, Feb 9, 2022

Request to amend HB1942, Relating to Student Transportation

HB 1942 seeks to provide an additional measure of relief for families who are eligible for transportation service and also qualify for a reduced lunch price, by creating a corresponding reduced bus pass rate. While the intent of the bill is admirable, it fails to create meaningful relief when weighed against the cost, not only financial, but in time and workload of its implementation and continued execution. I request that the committee amend the bill so that families who qualify for the reduced meal rate would then also qualify for a free bus pass.

The Food Services Branch has procedures in place for its three tiered system, requiring the Student Transportation Branch to create their own third tier would cause an additional workload for both the Branch and the schools, with the schools having to shoulder majority of the load once those procedures are in place. Amending the bill so that those who qualify for a free or reduced lunch, all qualify for a free bus pass would reduce the workload for both the schools and the branch. This would also provide more relief for the families who qualify.

If the committee truly wants to provide significant relief for the families of Hawai'i who require transportation, they should make it available at no cost to them. As it is in every other state in the nation.

Mahalo,
Kana'ina Warren

HB-1942

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 3:23:18 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/10/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Makanoe Hufana	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha I support HB1942 regarding the reduction of bus fare for students and households that have reduced lunch under the free and reduced-price lunch program. Appropriates funds.

Mahalo

Makanoe Hufana