



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/23/2023

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Resolution:** HCR 0075 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONTRACT WITH A QUALIFIED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION TO ESTABLISH AN AQUATIC SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on HCR 75.

As an island state, the Department recognizes the important role of public education in addressing water safety education and, as such, is moving forward to address this issue. Currently, the Department requires ocean safety education in all elementary schools. It promotes ocean safety and stewardship awareness education through an annual memo and distribution of Nā Kama Kai student activity booklets in English to all Department elementary schools and in 'ōlelo Hawai'i to all Kaiapuni elementary schools. In addition, the Department is collaborating with community partners to sponsor professional learning opportunities to provide additional training and professional development for school staff on this topic.

If passed, this resolution will place an undue burden on the Department, which will require additional personnel and resources to support the management and execution of a contract with a nonprofit organization. Activities include: conducting a needs assessment, executing the procurement contract process per state guidelines, managing funds, program promotion, communication, and implementation.

An aquatic safety education program that includes practicing skills in the water presents additional challenges (e.g., transportation to pools, lifeguards, instructors) that will need

to be addressed. While the Department appreciates the intent of this resolution, properly implementing and sustaining this program will require additional and sustained funding to ensure the longevity of this program.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this resolution.



**OUTRIGGER  
DUKE KAHANAMOKU  
FOUNDATION**

P. O. BOX 160924  
HONOLULU, HI 96816

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Testimony to the Committee on Education

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair; Rep. Lisa Marten, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 23, 2023, 2:00 pm

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Room 309

RE: HCR 75, Relating to Education

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and members of the Committee on Education:

On behalf of the Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation, I would like to testify in **strong support of Resolution HCR 75** to contract with a qualified nonprofit organization to establish an aquatic safety education program for elementary school students. Historically Hawaii had one of the strongest waterman cultures in the world, but the recent statistics show a different picture:

- **Nationally, Hawaii ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for rate of drowning among residents** in the 2016-2020 period. (HI Department of Health data)
- **96% of children 0-17 years who died by drowning in the period 2014-2018 in Hawaii were local residents.** (HI Department of Health data)
- **Hawaii children from lower income communities have significantly less aquatic safety skill competence.** (Hawaii Aquatics Academy Income Disparity Report)

The **World Health Organization** and the **United Nations** have both published reports which recommend community-wide aquatics education for children as one of the highest priority strategies for governments to reduce drowning.

We all know the cost-of-living challenges of raising children in Hawaii. There are many families that do not have the means, proximity, or knowledge to teach aquatics safety to their kids, nor the ability to pay for swim lessons. Aquatics safety in our public schools is critical education for our keiki and will save lives.

Thank you,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director

**DUKE'S CREED:**

*"In Hawai'i, we greet friends, loved ones or strangers with Aloha, which means with love. Aloha is the key word to the universal spirit of real hospitality, which makes Hawai'i renowned as the world's center of understanding and fellowship. Try meeting or leaving people with Aloha. You'll be surprised by their reaction. I believe it and it is my creed. Aloha to you."*

DUKE PAOA KAHANAMOKU



**March 22, 2023**

**Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**HCR 75 and HR 76, Relating to Department of Education and Aquatic Safety Education**

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Dean Schmaltz, President and Chairman of Hawaii Aquatics Foundation. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in **support of HCR 75 and HR 76** requesting the Department of Education to contract with a qualified nonprofit organization to establish an aquatic safety education program for elementary school students.

As an organization dedicated to providing standards-aligned aquatic safety education to Hawaii's elementary schools statewide, we are encouraged by the support of the introducers of this resolution. Due to the drowning being the leading cause of injury death for children (ages 1-14) in the state and the second highest for all ages in the nation, aquatic injury prevention education should provide more than a cursory approach. We need to prepare our children with attitudes, knowledge, skills, and experience necessary for both the avoidance of and recovery from hazardous aquatic situations — not only for their immediate benefit, but also to prepare them for adulthood and as future caregivers.

Our position is consistent with the recommendations and position statements of national and international injury prevention and lifesaving organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the International Life Saving Federation (ILS). These organizations recognize the importance of teaching both cognitive and physical skills during the elementary school developmental years. Providing school administrators and community partners with department support will help to facilitate the broader adoption of comprehensive classroom- and pool-based programming.

Further, to ensure that all the children of Hawaii are provided equal access to standards-aligned aquatic safety education, instruction needs to be administered during school hours. Reaching this position acknowledges various factors that limit the effectiveness of existing extracurricular options: the cost of private lessons is prohibitive for many families, municipal programs lack the resources to meet public demand for



aquatic safety education, and after-school and weekend lesson formats tend to emphasize competitive swimming strokes as opposed to aquatic safety competencies. Other factors that influence parents' decision to not have their children participate in formal aquatic safety education include cultural upbringing, their own fearfulness of the water, and overconfidence in their child's swimming abilities.

Thank you for considering these resolutions and providing community members with the opportunity to express our support for HCR 75 and HR 76. Your consideration of our comments is appreciated.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean E. Schmaltz".

Dean E. Schmaltz  
President, Chairman  
Hawaii Aquatics Foundation  
dba Hawaii Aquatics Academy

**HCR-75**

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 1:51:41 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessamy Town Hornor	Hawaii Aquatics Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of HCR75/HR76 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONTRACT WITH A QUALIFIED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION TO ESTABLISH AN AQUATIC SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

This Resolution is needed as there is currently no state-wide educational initiative to address the high rate of aquatic injury and death of Hawaii’s children and no state-sponsored support for schools who wish to adopt such programming.

I am writing first as a bereaved parent and wife - I lost my daughter and my husband to drowning in an ocean accident in 2016. Over the last six years I have advocated for aquatic safety initiatives in Hawaii because I do not want any other family to go through what I have. Drowning is preventable with proper education and safety measures.

The Hawaii Aquatic Foundation teaches aquatic safety education to our keiki during school-hours. It is not a learn to swim program but rather an injury prevention intervention based on international and national best practices. Since 2017 we have researched, developed and offered standards-based aquatic safety courses to more than 2,500 children during school hours by utilizing pools that are not in use during those times. Pools after school are often full and lessons are too expensive for many families. We have offered courses to public, charter, and private schools on Oahu, the Big Island, Kauai, and Maui, and with further funding they hope to take this program to schools statewide.

## The Need and the Solution:

The following Hawaii Aquatics Foundation data was gathered via the Academy's aquatic safety courses which feature a series of 10 half hour lessons, with 2 in the classroom and 8 in the pool.

The 2018-2019 Assessment Report features data from 564 2nd grade public, private, and charter school students in five different school districts on the islands of Kaua'i, Maui, and O'ahu. It provides an evaluation of standards-based assessments for student proficiency, before and after instruction, in three aquatic motor skills identified as essential components of personal aquatic safety competency.

"The evaluations in this report of pre-instruction assessments for three fundamental aquatic motor skills strongly suggest a majority of Hawai'i's elementary school students lack the set of basic skills identified as essential for drowning avoidance and recovery."

"The multi-skill evaluation of post-instruction assessments, when compared to pre-instruction assessments, demonstrates that measurable progress can be achieved toward the development of personal aquatic safety competence through formal aquatic safety education..."

## Overcoming the Opportunity Gap:

The Income Disparity Report demonstrates the following:

"Data shows that Hawai'i's children from lower-income areas is consistent with national statistics and reports that indicate significantly reduced water safety and swimming skill competence when compared to moderate-income and higher-income population groups."

"The opportunity gap in aquatic safety skill competence between the two income groups can be overcome by participation in a formal aquatic safety education program."

This resolution would further support those schools who wish to include formal, pool-based aquatic safety education.

Sincerely,

Jessamy Town Hornor

Community Engagement Manager

Hawaii Aquatics Foundation



**LATE**

**HCR-75**

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 9:59:18 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Titchen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure to improve ocean safety in our state. Sadly, we do not seem to do as well as we could in educating our keiki on skills that would keep them alive in the water, and help them keep others safe as well!