MAR 15 2006

S.R. NO. 121

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION CONDUCT AN IMMEDIATE INTERNAL REVIEW OF "ALTERNATE LUNCH" SERVICE IN HAWAII SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, the standard price of a school lunch in Hawaii public schools is one dollar, and low-income students can qualify for a reduced-lunch rate of twenty cents, or nothing at all, depending upon reported household income; and

WHEREAS, qualifying for the reduced lunch rate requires parental awareness of such a program, and the submission of a written application, which may be lacking in the community; and

WHEREAS, the failure of parents to give their children enough money for lunch can be expensive for schools that must make up the difference, and one school has already accrued \$5,000 in outstanding lunch-money loans, which may have to come out of general funds, taking moneys away from education; and

WHEREAS, some schools facing lunch money deficits have resorted to serving "alternate lunches" to students, which can consist merely of a starch such as crackers, a piece of bread, or a cinnamon roll, and either juice, milk, or water; and

WHEREAS, this "alternate lunch" practice is draconian and highly unacceptable, falls far short of the balanced meal guidelines set by the National School Lunch Program, punishes the students, who are not at fault, and leaves students hungry when they need proper nutrition to learn and prosper; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds the "alternative lunch" practice frustrating and disappointing, and calls on the Department of Education to remedy the situation immediately; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature is in full support of advocacy efforts to find proper remedy for this situation, including the efforts of Maui Board of Education member Mary Cochran, who is planning to raise the issue with Department of Education

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 officials at a session of the Special Programs committee she chairs; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2006, that the Department of Education is requested to conduct an immediate internal review into the "alternate lunch" practice, and any other methods by which student nutrition and well-being may be compromised in Hawaii schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education shall report its findings to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the commencement of the Regular Session of 2007; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education and the Chair of the Board of Education.

OFFERED BY:

