
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LITERACY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's children
2 and families benefit immensely from literacy programs. Most
3 importantly, literacy programs assist children with learning to
4 read. However, literacy programs also serve to bridge the gap
5 between home and school in Hawaii's community by building
6 stronger family relationships, improving the academic tone
7 within homes, and changing family attitudes toward school.

8 The benefits of literacy programs are evident in the work
9 of existing nonprofits. Read Aloud America is a Hawaii
10 nonprofit that brings children and parents together in local
11 schools and motivates them to read. In addition to parents
12 increasing their own reading time, eighty-seven per cent of
13 parents who participated in the program report that their
14 children's voluntary reading time increased, and seventy-one per
15 cent report their children spend less time with electronic
16 media. Teachers have also seen encouraging results and report
17 positive changes in student behavior, increased interest in
18 reading, and improved home to school relationships. Since 1999,



1 Read Aloud America has served eighty-six Hawaii public schools
2 and over 315,000 adults and children. Another organization,
3 Read to Me International, is also committed to improving child
4 literacy. Active on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, Molokai, and
5 Kauai, the nonprofit collaborates with community volunteers to
6 educate families about the importance of reading aloud to
7 children and raising children who value reading.

8 The legislature further finds that child literacy programs
9 have previously been supported by funds from the department of
10 human services. Currently, valuable literacy programs such as
11 Read Aloud America and Read to Me International are suffering
12 from a lack of state funding. The governor's council for
13 literacy was established in 1987 to work toward a literate
14 Hawaii, and Hawaii families continue to need education and
15 resources to help children learn to read and families become
16 more engaged in their local schools and community.

17 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
18 department of human services to establish a statewide literacy
19 program. Utilizing existing programs and nonprofits to provide
20 direct services to Hawaii's families, the department of human
21 services will administer a literacy program that supports a
22 bright future for Hawaii's children and families.



1 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
3 and to read as follows:

4 "§346- Statewide literacy program. (a) There shall be
5 established within the department a statewide literacy program
6 to help increase Hawaii's literacy rates and benefit Hawaii's
7 children and families. The department shall administer the
8 literacy program.

9 (b) The department may contract with third-party
10 organizations and nonprofit organizations to assist with
11 carrying out the literacy program."

12 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
13 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
14 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 for
15 the department of human services to establish a statewide
16 literacy program, including all program costs and hiring of any
17 necessary staff.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
19 human services for the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

21



H.B. NO. 1596

1 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.

2

INTRODUCED BY:

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By Request

JAN 10 2014



H.B. NO. 1596

Report Title:

Child Literacy; Department of Human Services; Appropriation

Description:

Provides funding to the department of human services to establish a statewide literacy program utilizing local programs and nonprofits to provide direct services.

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