

JAN 29 2015

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FAMILY 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 participation in literacy
3 programs. Literacy programs primarily assist children with
4 learning to read, however, these prevention programs also serve
5 to bridge the gap between home and school in Hawaii's community
6 by building stronger family relationships, improving the
7 academic tone within homes, and changing family attitudes toward
8 school.

9 The benefits of family literacy programs are evident in the
10 work of existing nonprofits. For example, Read Aloud America is
11 a Hawaii nonprofit that brings children and parents together in
12 local schools and motivates them to read. Since 1999, Read
13 Aloud America has served eighty-nine Hawaii public schools and
14 over 328,000 adults and children. In addition to parents
15 increasing their own reading time, eighty-seven per cent of
16 parents who participated in the program reported that their
17 children's voluntary reading time had increased, and seventy-one



1 per cent reported their children spent less time with electronic
2 media. Teachers also see encouraging results and have reported
3 positive changes in student behavior, increased interest in
4 reading, and improved home to school relationships.

5 Read to Me International is another example of an existing
6 local organization committed to improving child literacy.
7 Active on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, Molokai, and Kauai, this
8 nonprofit collaborates with community volunteers to educate
9 families about the importance of reading aloud to children and
10 of raising children who value reading.

11 The legislature further finds that child literacy programs
12 which have previously been supported by funds from the
13 department of human services are currently suffering from a lack
14 of state funding. The governor's council for literacy was
15 established in 1987 to work toward a literate Hawaii, and
16 Hawaii's families continue to need education and resources to
17 help children learn to read and to encourage families to become
18 more engaged in their local schools and community.

19 The purpose of this Act is to establish a statewide
20 literacy program under the department of human services, and to
21 appropriate funds for its establishment. By utilizing existing



1 programs and collaborating with nonprofit groups to provide
2 direct services to Hawaii's families, the department of human
3 services will administer a literacy program that supports a
4 bright future for Hawaii's children and families.

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

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

13 (b) The department may contract with third-party
14 organizations and nonprofit organizations to assist with
15 implementing the statewide literacy program."

16 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 and
19 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2016-2017 for the department of human services to establish



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1 a statewide literacy program, including all program costs and
2 hiring of any necessary staff.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
4 of human services for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2015.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Frank E. Pede



S.B. NO. 1337

Report Title:

Family Literacy; Department of Human Services; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a statewide literacy program under DHS. Allows direct services to be provided by existing programs and nonprofits. Makes an appropriation.

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