

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS TO BE EDUCATED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL HEALTH IMPACT OF HEAVY BACKPACKS AND TO TAKE PROACTIVE MEASURES TO AVOID INJURY.

1	WHEREAS, overloaded school backpacks are causing an		
2	increasing problem of back pain and spinal strain for students		
3	across the nation; and		
4			
5	WHEREAS, because spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully		
6	developed until after the age of sixteen, overweight backpacks		
7	are a source of repeated low-level stress that may result in		
8	chronic neck, shoulder, or back pain in children; and		
9			
10	WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety		
11	Commission, more than seven thousand emergency room visits each		
12	year are due to backpack-related injuries; and		
13			
14	WHEREAS, in 2010 alone, physicians' offices, clinics, and		
15	hospital emergency rooms treated nearly twenty-eight thousand		
16	strains, sprains, dislocations, and fractures from backpacks;		
17	and		
18			
19	WHEREAS, studies show that heavy loads carried on the back		
20	have the potential to damage the soft tissues of the shoulder,		
21	causing microstructural damage to the nerves and damage to		
22	internal organs; and		
23			
24	WHEREAS, studies show an increase in curvatures of the		
25	spine and compressed intervertebral height when backpacks exceed		
26	ten per cent of a child's body weight; and		
27			
28	WHEREAS, the Global Burden of Disease Study of 2010 shows		
29	back pain and musculoskeletal disorders as the leading causes of		
30	disability worldwide; and		



H.C.R. NO. 44

1 WHEREAS, children's textbooks are much heavier now than many years ago, and in addition to textbooks, students often 2 3 carry computers, cell phones, water bottles, running shoes, band instruments, and other equipment considered essential to have 4 5 readily available; and 6 7 WHEREAS, more than ninety per cent of students carry 8 backpacks that studies show weigh as much as twenty-five per 9 cent of the child's body weight; and 10 WHEREAS, backpacks are often not worn correctly but are 11 12 frequently slung over one shoulder or allowed to hang 13 significantly below the waistline, increasing the weight on the shoulders and making the child lean forward when walking or 14 15 stoop forward when standing to compensate for the weight; now, 16 therefore, 17 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the 18 19 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session 20 of 2017, the Senate concurring, that we strongly urge all school administrators, teachers, parents, and students to be educated 21 about the potential health impact of heavy backpacks and to take 22 23 proactive measures to avoid injury; and 24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that schools should work with their 25 parent-teacher associations to assess the extent to which 26 27 students use overweight backpacks and to promote innovative 28 homework strategies, lessening the need to take all school 29 materials and books back and forth each day; and 30 31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that schools should consider the 32 following points when developing their backpack education 33 talking points: 34 35 (1)Encourage children to use backpacks that weigh no more than a maximum of ten per cent of the child's body 36 37 weight; 38 (2) Encourage the use of ergonomic backpacks with 39 individualized compartments to efficiently hold books 40 and equipment; 41

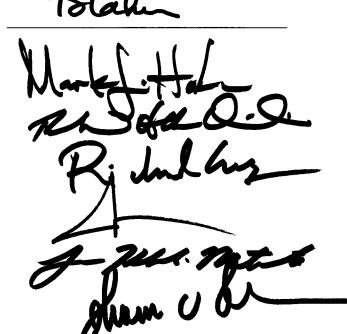


H.C.R. NO. 44

1 2 3	(3)	Encourage children to wear both shoulder straps and not sling the backpack over one shoulder;	
4 5 6	(4)	Encourage the use of wide, padded adjustable straps to fit a child's body;	
7 8 9	(5)	Encourage leaving the heaviest books at school and the use of handouts or workbooks for homework assignments;	
10 11 12	(6)	Consider increased usage of e-textbooks as federal and state funding becomes available; and	
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	(7)	Consider integrated education about backpacks by using a hanging scale in the classroom, allowing students to weigh backpacks, enter the results into a graph to track the weights, and look at the data to determine what can be done to lighten loads; and	
19 20 21 22 23 24	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education, the Chairperson of the Board of Education, the Director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, and the Executive Director of the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission.		
25 26 27		TST-Q.	

OFFERED BY:

hi





3