

MAR 12 2021

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING THE GOVERNOR TO MAINTAIN TEACHERS AS ESSENTIAL
WORKERS DURING A PANDEMIC WHEN CONTEMPLATING EMERGENCY
FURLOUGHS AND LAYOFFS.

1 WHEREAS, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic
2 continues to have a devastating impact on the State's education
3 system, forcing teachers and students to adjust to remote online
4 learning, significant learning losses, blended classes, and
5 other hardships; and
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7 WHEREAS, in December 2020, the Department of Education
8 announced the details of furlough plans for its 21,900 full-
9 time, salaried employees, and under the proposed furlough plan,
10 teachers would have been required to take six furlough days
11 between January 1, 2021, and June 30, 2021; and
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13 WHEREAS, on January 21, 2021, the Governor announced that
14 with additional federal funds and more optimistic revenue
15 projections, the public school/education budget cut was reduced
16 from ten percent to 2.5 percent; and
17

18 WHEREAS, even with the reduction in budget cuts, the
19 Department of Education still faces roughly \$140,000,000 in
20 budget cuts for the 2021 school year, with close to seven
21 hundred teachers being subject to potential layoff, and with
22 some schools losing ten percent of their faculty; and
23

24 WHEREAS, the Department of Health defines frontline
25 essential workers as those "whose duties must be performed on-
26 site and require being in close proximity to the public or
27 coworkers, and are essential to the functioning of society"; and
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29 WHEREAS, teachers are expected to continue to show up to
30 work directly with students or work at schools where students
31 are going to a campus to receive services; and
32



S.C.R. NO. 154

1 WHEREAS, for purposes of vaccine distribution, the State
2 has placed teachers in the 1b category, which includes those
3 deemed "frontline essential workers", such as first responders,
4 corrections officers, child care providers, emergency services
5 dispatchers, U.S. Postal Service employees, and others; and
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7 WHEREAS, reopening schools is critical to reopening the
8 economy, ensuring childcare for the state's workforce, and
9 maintaining a stable learning environment for students; and
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11 WHEREAS, updated Centers for Disease Control school-
12 reopening guidelines show that all Hawaii's counties were in the
13 lowest-risk category and could safely reopen; and
14

15 WHEREAS, the Department of Education recently announced
16 that all Hawaii elementary schools could be reopened for in-
17 person learning by the end of March 2021; now, therefore,
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19 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
20 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the
21 House of Representatives concurring, that the Governor is urged
22 to maintain teachers as essential workers during the COVID-19
23 pandemic or any future pandemic, when contemplating emergency
24 furloughs and layoffs; and
25

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
27 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor,
28 Superintendent of Education, Executive Director of the Board of
29 Education, and President of the Hawaii State Teachers
30 Association.
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OFFERED BY:

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