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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING THE GOVERNOR TO MAINTAIN TEACHERS AND SCHOOL-LEVEL PERSONNEL AS ESSENTIAL WORKERS DURING A PANDEMIC WHEN CONTEMPLATING EMERGENCY FURLONGHS 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, school-level personnel, and students  
4 to adjust to remote online learning, and blended classes, and  
5 causing significant learning losses and 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  
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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 subject to potential layoff, and some schools  
22 losing ten percent of their faculty; and  
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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 and school-level personnel are expected  
30 to continue to show up to work directly with students or work at



1 schools where students are going to a campus to receive  
2 services; and  
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4 WHEREAS, for purposes of vaccine distribution, the State  
5 has placed teachers and educational support staff in the 1b  
6 category, which includes those deemed "frontline essential  
7 workers", such as first responders, corrections officers, child  
8 care providers, emergency services dispatchers, U.S. Postal  
9 Service employees, and others; and  
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11 WHEREAS, reopening schools is critical to reopening the  
12 economy, ensuring childcare for the State's workforce, and  
13 maintaining a stable learning environment for students; and  
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15 WHEREAS, updated guidelines from the Centers for Disease  
16 Control show that all of Hawaii's counties were in the lowest-  
17 risk category and could safely reopen; and  
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19 WHEREAS, the Department of Education recently announced  
20 that all Hawaii elementary schools could reopen for in-person  
21 learning by the end of March 2021; now, therefore,  
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23 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
24 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the  
25 House of Representatives concurring, that the Governor is urged  
26 to maintain teachers and school-level personnel as essential  
27 workers during the COVID-19 pandemic or any future pandemic,  
28 when contemplating emergency furloughs and layoffs; and  
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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
31 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor,  
32 Superintendent of Education, Executive Director of the Board of  
33 Education, and President of the Hawaii State Teachers  
34 Association.

