

MAR 12 2021

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# SENATE 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  
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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 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  
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33           WHEREAS, for purposes of vaccine distribution, the State  
34 has placed teachers in the 1b category, which includes those  
35 deemed "frontline essential workers", such as first responders,



# S.R. NO. 119

1 corrections officers, child care providers, emergency services  
2 dispatchers, U.S. Postal Service employees, and others; and  
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4 WHEREAS, reopening schools is critical to reopening the  
5 economy, ensuring childcare for the state's workforce, and  
6 maintaining a stable learning environment for students; and  
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8 WHEREAS, updated Centers for Disease Control school-  
9 reopening guidelines show that all Hawaii's counties were in the  
10 lowest-risk category and could safely reopen; and  
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12 WHEREAS, the Department of Education recently announced  
13 that all Hawaii elementary schools could be reopened for in-  
14 person learning by the end of March 2021; now, therefore,  
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16 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
17 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021,  
18 that the Governor is urged to maintain teachers as essential  
19 workers during the COVID-19 pandemic or any future pandemic,  
20 when contemplating emergency furloughs and layoffs; and  
21

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
23 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Superintendent of  
24 Education, Executive Director of the Board of Education, and  
25 President of the Hawaii State Teachers Association.  
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OFFERED BY:

