
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO
REMEDY STATEWIDE SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION INEQUITIES FOR
SCHOOLCHILDREN FROM LOW- TO MODERATE-INCOME FAMILIES.

1 WHEREAS, the United States Constitution requires that all
2 children be given equal educational opportunities regardless of
3 their race, ethnicity, religion, sex, socioeconomic status, or
4 citizenship; and

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6 WHEREAS, access to safe and efficient transportation to and
7 from school is a fundamental part of public education's mission
8 to ensure all children have access to equal educational
9 opportunities; and

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11 WHEREAS, a lack of school transportation services leads to
12 tardiness, absenteeism, and poor educational performances and
13 outcomes for schoolchildren; and

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15 WHEREAS, students on the free or reduced meals program who
16 rely on receiving their meals at school are also negatively
17 impacted by a lack of transportation services because an absence
18 or tardy could mean these students will miss crucial meals; and

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20 WHEREAS, parents and guardians without reliable
21 transportation often must make difficult choices to ensure their
22 child can get to and from school, including having their child
23 stay with a relative or close family friend, resulting in
24 disruptions to the child's home life; and

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26 WHEREAS, higher income families have the resources to
27 transport their children to and from school on time, which
28 dramatically decreases the likelihood of tardiness and
29 absenteeism, resulting in better student performances; and
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1 WHEREAS, using personal vehicles to transport children to
2 and from school increases traffic congestion in communities and
3 delays families from completing their household and financial
4 responsibilities on time; and
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6 WHEREAS, while school bus route shortages existed before
7 the current pandemic, COVID-19 has reduced the size of the
8 school bus driver workforce by fifteen percent and has resulted
9 in the suspension of at least thirty statewide school bus
10 routes; and
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12 WHEREAS, these critical statewide school bus service
13 disruptions, specifically on the neighbor islands, widen the
14 equity gap between low- and high-income families and contribute
15 to learning loss amongst students who are chronically absent or
16 tardy; and
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18 WHEREAS, previous attempts to remedy the lack of school bus
19 services, such as the Hele-On partnership with Hawaii County
20 public schools to provide students with free monthly bus passes,
21 have proven to be inadequate, unsafe for unaccompanied
22 elementary schoolchildren, take longer than traditional school
23 bus routes, and still transport students to school late; and
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25 WHEREAS, to ensure children have equal opportunities to
26 attend public school, it is urgent that the Department of
27 Education increase school bus routes and services, particularly
28 on neighbor islands and in rural areas; now, therefore,
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30 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
31 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
32 of 2022, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Education
33 is urged to convene a working group to remedy school bus
34 transportation inequity for low- to moderate-income families;
35 and
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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that working group is urged to
38 consider the possibility of paying shortage differentials to
39 incentivize the hiring of more school bus drivers to help remedy
40 school bus transportation inequity, especially on the neighbor
41 islands and in rural areas; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
2 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations regarding
3 school bus service, including any proposed legislation, to the
4 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
5 the Regular Session of 2023; and

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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
8 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
9 Board of Education and Interim Superintendent of Education.

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