
HOUSE 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

5
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

10
11 WHEREAS, a lack of school transportation services leads to
12 tardiness, absenteeism, and poor educational performances and
13 outcomes for schoolchildren; and

14
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

19
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

25
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

30
31 WHEREAS, using personal vehicles to transport children to
32 and from school increases traffic congestion in communities and



1 delays families from completing their household and financial
2 responsibilities on time; and

3
4 WHEREAS, while school bus route shortages existed before
5 the current pandemic, COVID-19 has reduced the size of the
6 school bus driver workforce by fifteen percent and has resulted
7 in the suspension of at least thirty statewide school bus
8 routes; and

9
10 WHEREAS, these critical statewide school bus service
11 disruptions, specifically on the neighbor islands, widen the
12 equity gap between low- and high-income families and contribute
13 to learning loss amongst students who are chronically absent or
14 tardy; and

15
16 WHEREAS, previous attempts to remedy the lack of school bus
17 services, such as the Hele-On partnership with Hawaii County
18 public schools to provide students with free monthly bus passes,
19 have proven to be inadequate, unsafe for unaccompanied
20 elementary schoolchildren, take longer than traditional school
21 bus routes, and still transport students to school late; and

22
23 WHEREAS, to ensure children have equal opportunities to
24 attend public school, it is urgent that the Department of
25 Education increase school bus routes and services, particularly
26 on neighbor islands and in rural areas; now, therefore,

27
28 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
29 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
30 of 2022, that the Department of Education is urged to convene a
31 working group to remedy school bus transportation inequity for
32 low- to moderate-income families; and

33
34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that working group is urged to
35 consider the possibility of paying shortage differentials to
36 incentivize the hiring of more school bus drivers to help remedy
37 school bus transportation inequity, especially on the neighbor
38 islands and in rural areas; and

39
40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
41 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations regarding
42 school bus service, including any proposed legislation, to the



1 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
2 the Regular Session of 2023; and

3

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
5 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
6 Education and Interim Superintendent of Education.

7

8

9

