
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONTRACT WITH A
QUALIFIED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION TO ESTABLISH AQUATIC
SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION SCHOOLS.

1 WHEREAS, drowning is a tragic but preventable cause of
2 injury and death in the State, especially among children; and
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4 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health, drowning
5 was the leading cause of injury-related mortality for Hawaii's
6 children between 2014 and 2018; and
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8 WHEREAS, more children died by drowning than in motor
9 vehicle and pedestrian accidents combined, and an alarmingly
10 large proportion of those child drownings were among resident
11 children; and
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13 WHEREAS, during the same period, there were an annual
14 average of seventy non-fatal child drowning incidents attended
15 by emergency medical services; and
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17 WHEREAS, although individuals who experience non-fatal
18 drowning incidents escape with their lives, some are left with
19 severe brain damage and may face long-term disabilities such as
20 memory problems, learning disabilities, or permanent losses of
21 basic functions, a disorder often referred to as a persistent
22 vegetative state; and
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24 WHEREAS, many drowning deaths could be prevented through
25 aquatic safety education programs; and
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27 WHEREAS, the International Life Saving Federation's
28 Position Statement for Swimming and Safety Education recommends
29 that everyone have access to training in water safety, personal
30 survival, and water rescue; and
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1 WHEREAS, the International Life Saving Federation
2 recommends that this training be available to everyone
3 regardless of ability and background and should commence at the
4 earliest possible age; and

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6 WHEREAS, despite these recommendations, many of Hawaii's
7 youth do not have the opportunity to receive aquatic safety
8 instruction; and

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10 WHEREAS, less than ten percent of public and public charter
11 elementary schools integrate aquatic safety education into their
12 physical education curricula; and

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14 WHEREAS, outside of schools, municipal aquatic safety
15 programs lack the resources to meet public demand, and the cost
16 of obtaining private lessons is often cost-prohibitive for many
17 local families; and

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19 WHEREAS, as a result, many children are inadequately
20 prepared for water-related emergencies; and

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22 WHEREAS, an assessment of Hawaii students conducted by the
23 Hawaii Aquatics Academy during the 2018-2019 school year found
24 that only thirty-one percent of participating students could
25 swim for twenty-five yards, only twelve percent could float for
26 thirty seconds, and only thirteen percent could tread water for
27 sixty seconds; and

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29 WHEREAS, all children should be provided equal access to
30 standards-based aquatic safety education programs; and

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32 WHEREAS, to achieve this, aquatic safety education should
33 be integrated into the health and physical education curricula
34 of public schools; and

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36 WHEREAS, providing proper training in water safety,
37 personal survival, and water rescue will help to ensure that the
38 State's youth, especially those from low- and moderate-income
39 communities, know how to avoid and recover from hazardous
40 aquatic situations; now, therefore,
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1 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
2 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
3 Session of 2023, that the Department of Education is requested
4 to contract with a qualified nonprofit organization to establish
5 aquatic safety education programs in schools that wish to
6 participate and for which funding is available; and
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this aquatic safety education
9 program be offered to elementary school students during regular
10 school hours; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
13 requested to conduct a statewide needs assessment in preparation
14 for establishing an aquatic safety education program in all
15 Department of Education elementary schools to be contracted with
16 one or more qualified nonprofit organizations during regular
17 school hours; and
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
20 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the
21 Board of Education, and Superintendent of Education.

