
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONTRACT WITH A QUALIFIED
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION TO ESTABLISH AN AQUATIC SAFETY
EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

1 WHEREAS, aquatic injuries and deaths by drowning in the
2 State are tragic but preventable, especially among children; and
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4 WHEREAS, the Department of Health has found that drowning
5 was the leading cause of injury-related mortality for Hawaii's
6 children between 2014 and 2018, accounting for more deaths of
7 children than motor vehicle and pedestrian accidents combined;
8 and
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10 WHEREAS, although visitors made up a slight majority of the
11 total fatal drownings that occurred in the State between 2014
12 and 2018, an alarmingly large proportion of child drownings--
13 ninety-six percent--were among resident children; and
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15 WHEREAS, during the same period, there was an annual
16 average of seventy non-fatal child drowning incidents attended
17 by emergency medical services; and
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19 WHEREAS, although individuals who experience non-fatal
20 drowning incidents escape with their lives, some are left with
21 severe brain damage and may face long-term disabilities,
22 including memory problems, learning disabilities, or permanent
23 losses of basic functions, a disorder often referred to as a
24 persistent vegetative state; and
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26 WHEREAS, given the potential for death or severe long-term
27 injuries, the State should prioritize the prevention of fatal
28 and non-fatal drownings; and
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30 WHEREAS, many drowning deaths could be prevented through
31 deliberate government action; and
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1 WHEREAS, the International Life Saving Federation's
2 Position Statement for Swimming and Safety Education recommends
3 that everyone have access to training in water safety, personal
4 survival, and water rescue; and

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6 WHEREAS, ideally, this training should commence at a young
7 age and be available regardless of ability and background; and

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9 WHEREAS, in addition, the International Life Saving
10 Federation recommends that knowledge and understanding of water
11 environments and their associated hazards should be taught to
12 everyone at the earliest possible age; and

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14 WHEREAS, despite these recommendations, many of Hawaii's
15 youth do not have the opportunity to receive aquatic safety
16 instruction with less than ten percent of public and public
17 charter elementary schools integrating aquatic safety education
18 into their physical education curriculums; and

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20 WHEREAS, outside of schools, municipal aquatic safety
21 programs lack the resources to meet public demand, and obtaining
22 private lessons is often cost-prohibitive for many local
23 families, leaving many children inadequately prepared for water-
24 related emergencies; and

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

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33 WHEREAS, all children should be provided equal access to
34 standards-based aquatic safety education programs, and to
35 achieve this, aquatic safety education should be integrated into
36 the health and physical education curriculums of public schools;
37 and

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39 WHEREAS, providing proper training in water safety,
40 personal survival, and water rescue will help to ensure that the
41 State's youth, especially those from low- and moderate-income



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1 communities, know how to avoid and recover from hazardous
2 aquatic situations; and
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4 WHEREAS, proper training in water safety, personal
5 survival, and water rescue would also be consistent with the
6 Department of Health's Hawaii Injury Prevention Plan 2018-2023,
7 which aims to decrease the incidence of drownings in the State;
8 now, therefore,
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10 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
11 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
12 Session of 2024, that the Department of Education is urged to
13 contract with a qualified nonprofit organization to establish an
14 aquatic safety education program for elementary school students;
15 and
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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
18 Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent and Chairperson
19 of the Board of Education.
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OFFERED BY:



MAR 08 2024

