



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/22/2023

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 0540, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, requires the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students. Appropriates funds. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB 540, HD1, but provides comments and concerns.

The school meal program operates in each Department's non-charter schools and offers meals to its students from elementary through high school. The Department has observed higher than normal negative balances across the state for School Year 2022 – 2023. As of December 2022, the balance is approximately \$100,000 statewide.

The Department understands the importance of child nutrition and its role in improving overall student health and agrees that children should have adequate meals provided to them, including lunch. It supports serving one school lunch to any requesting student at no cost each school day in every school where the students are required to eat meals at school if the Department receives funding to subsidize what is not obtained through Federal claim reimbursements.

The Department disagrees that the appropriation amount be directed to the Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs. It should be appropriated to the Department's School Food Services Branch (SFSB), which manages the school food program operations and current state funding for the Department's non-charter schools.

The cost to fund this legislation is, at minimum, \$63,840,850 at the current meal participation rates, but it ranges due to several variables we cannot account for at this time. These variables include meal participation, labor increases, and food and supply cost increases. For example, currently, lunch participation is at 50%. If participation were to increase to 75%, the need would be, at minimum, \$137,914,564. Effective July 2023, the SFSB will receive an increase in its federal reimbursement rate, at 30% above the continental United States. This rate increase was factored into these calculations, but the exact rate has not yet been verified by the Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs. Current calculations have also included additional costs to fund the Afterschool Snack Program, which although not indicated in this legislation, the SFSB participates in and receives federal reimbursement for. That represents approximately \$433,654 of the total cost to fund this legislation at the current meal participation rates.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



CATHY K. IKEDA
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HB 540 HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION
DATE: March 22, 2023
TIME: 3:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education
ROOM: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on **HB 540 HD1** which requires the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. Appropriates funds.

The Commission deeply appreciates the support to provide free breakfast and lunch to all public school students including public charter school students. We agree that public charter school students should be provided the same as their fellow public school students in the Department public schools, however, unlike our Department public schools, not all public charter schools are participants in the National School Lunch program (NSLP). Due to operational and fiscal barriers of this federal program, many of our public charter schools do not have the personnel, nor facilities, or access to vendors that can meet the strict requirements of the NSLP. Currently only 20 of our 37 public charter schools participate in the NSLP.

Additionally, as the Commission is not structured like the Hawaii Department of Education, the Commission also does not have the capacity to manage such a program for all public charter schools. This is a fundamental difference in the way the public charter school system is structured. The Commission is more akin to a regulatory agency and not one that can duplicate the structures of the Hawaii Department of Education to support and manage such a program. We would ask that the Commission and its public charter schools be given additional time to

work with the Hawaii Department of Education and other associated agencies to find possible solutions to this problem of ensuring that all public charter schools students can be provided free breakfast and lunch.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



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Department of Pediatrics*

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD
State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public Defender

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community Health
Worker Initiative

COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective

Date: March 20, 2023

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

Re: Support for HB540 HD1, Relating to Education

Hrg: Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at 3:00 PM, Conf Rm 415

The Obesity Prevention Task Force (OPTF), a program of Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ (HIPHI), is in **strong support of HB 540 HD1**, which would provide free school meals for all students.

Everyone Deserves Access to an Education and Food

Access to free public education is not given only to those who can least afford it. All students, regardless of income, are given the opportunity to attend school. The same should be true of the food served at school. Food is an absolute necessity for families and students regardless of income.

Discriminating against those whose income is just above the threshold or who have not successfully filled out the paperwork creates many adverse outcomes. Students are hungry, families miss or cannot afford lunch payments, or they must budget away from other areas of their life. Hawai'i needs to support all students, regardless of income, in receiving free meals.

Current Subsidies Are Not Enough

Families with incomes above 133% of the federal poverty line require support but are not getting it.ⁱⁱ Families of 4 earning just \$42,000 per year are not eligible for free school meals but earn less than half of what is needed to be self-sufficient.ⁱⁱⁱ These ALICE families do not qualify for free lunches despite having significant needs. 1 in 3 Hawai'i households are part of the ALICE population who need increased support.^{iv} The arbitrary cut-off at 133% of the federal poverty line hurts children and does not accurately reflect the needs of our local families.

Ending the benefits cliff is necessary to stop penalizing families earning slightly more than the maximum benefits threshold. A family with two children loses thousands of dollars in benefits simply because their income is slightly more than the allowable amount.

Creating a Culture for All

The stigma that exists for students and families who participate in the free and reduced lunch program is real and can lead to increased bullying, among other negative outcomes. It is not something that should exist. Judgment should not be placed upon parents or their children due to their financial situation.

In addition, running out of lunch money happens far too often to many families. The angst that is felt by a student whose balance is low is not something that any child should experience. Freeing all of our families from the burden of maintaining a lunch fund is a benefit to all of Hawai'i. This program will support all students to feel welcomed. Students cannot be ready to learn unless their basic needs are met. Ensuring that all children are being fed helps to meet those needs.

Please pass this bill to create a Hawai'i where all students have access to school meals.

Mahalo,



Nate Hix
Food Access Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force comprises over 60 statewide organizations and makes recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and healthcare environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

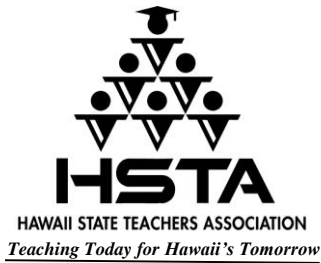
Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

ⁱⁱ

<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/StudentHealthResources/Pages/FreeReducedLunch.aspx>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/annuals/2021/2021-read-self-sufficiency.pdf>

^{iv} <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/forefront.20220504.114330/>



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: HB 540, HD1 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2023

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports HB 540, HD1**, relating to education. This bill, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, requires the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students. Appropriates funds.

Student success demands a nourished body and mind. Too often, our children come to school hungry or without access to quality medical care, leaving them lurching through the school day, rather than learning instructional content.

In Hawai'i, food insecurity is one of the most pressing manifestations of overall socioeconomic inequality. Over 70,000 public school students eat free or reduced-price meals in our state, though only 40 percent eat school breakfasts. Hawai'i ranks 47th in school breakfast participation rates among qualifying students.

As noted in the bill, the Department of Education estimates that as many as 15,000 students each year are considered “gap” and come from gap families who do not qualify for the National School Lunch Program, but struggle with food insecurity nonetheless. **This bill seeks to help provide free lunches to all enrolled students, thus will prevent any child from not being able to eat lunch, or being stigmatized for not having enough funds on their account to pay for lunch as well.**

Cases of chronic hunger can lead to achievement gaps, concentration loss, illness, increased absenteeism, behavioral problems, depression, and misdiagnosed learning disabilities. Thus, providing a decent meal for our impoverished children is a moral and educational imperative.

For the sake of our students' wellness, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
March 22, 2023

The Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senate Committee on Education
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Kidani and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB540 HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB540 HD1**, which, Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, requires the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students. Appropriates funds.

Malnutrition in children can cause a developmental delay and may worsen or cause a developmental disability. Members of the Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) community are disproportionately lower income, and any programs designed to relive financial pressure from families will also benefit our community. Families with parents or children who have I/DD but do not qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch can still have their financial need met through this program.

Children who attend schools under the Hawai'i Department of Education deserve access to healthy and filling lunches. This measure will ensure that all families who need aid, including I/DD community members, will be able to make sure their children get the food they need.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of HB540 HD1**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 540, H.D. 1, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

DATE: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 229

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Anne T. Horiuchi or Catherine D. Piazza, Deputy Attorneys General

Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

The purposes of this bill are to require the Department of Education (DOE) and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, and to appropriate a yet unspecified amount of funds.

In four instances, the bill mistakenly refers to "lunch" in provisions concerning school breakfasts. Because different regulations apply to school breakfast and lunches, the Department respectfully recommends that the bill be amended as follows:

- (1) Page 1, line 12: replace "lunch" with "breakfast".
- (2) Page 1, line 13: replace "lunches" with "breakfasts".
- (3) Page 3, line 9: replace "lunch" with "breakfast".
- (4) Page 3, line 10: replace "lunches" with "breakfasts".

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for H.B. 540 – Relating to Education
Senate Committee on Education
Thursday, March 22, 2023, at 3:00PM

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support (with amendments) of **H.B. 540**, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Education (HIDOE) to cover the costs of school meals for all students.

Adequate nutrition is essential for children’s health, learning, and long-term development. However, there are still up to one in four children in Hawai‘i that regularly go without enough nutritious meals at home.¹ This means that for many children in Hawai‘i, school breakfast and lunch are the most nutritious meals they get in a day.

Federal eligibility for free or reduced price meals requires that households earn below 130% of the federal poverty level (\$44,850 annually for a family of four in 2023). However, Hawai‘i’s costs of living require that a family with two adults and two school age children make between \$70,000 and \$80,000 to survive.²

The federal government covered the full cost of all school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing much needed relief for families that were struggling in an unstable economy. In prior years, school meal debt would still occasionally reach as high as \$60,000 - \$70,000 by the end of the year. However, once meal fees returned post-pandemic, the Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE) saw a rise in school meal debt unlike they had ever seen before, reaching approximately \$100,000 by December of 2022.

It may be prudent for the legislature to include language that would maximize the use of federal funds, thereby minimizing the costs to the state. We offer the following suggestion, which could replace the text in section 1(f) and 2(f):

“It is the intent of the legislature that the Department of Education and participating schools use all of the federal funds, federal programs and federal provisions available in carrying out this program.”

Thank you for considering this testimony in your deliberation of H.B. 540. As shown in the attached one page brief, eight states have already passed policies to fund universal free meals for students, and 22 others (Hawai‘i included) are deliberating policies this year. We are pleased that the Hawai‘i legislature is paying attention to this important issue at a time when it is clearly gaining momentum across the nation. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

¹ Feeding America estimates of Food Insecurity among the Child (<18 years) Population in Hawai‘i (2020)

² Aloha United Way. Hawai‘i Household Budgets for each county (2018)

Healthy School Meals for All

Universal Free School Meals: Cost Estimates for the State of Hawai'i

Universal free school meals allow all enrolled children in a school that operates the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program to receive free breakfast and lunch, regardless of their family's income.

Eight states have already passed policies to offer free meals, and many others are prepared to follow suit. The Hawai'i legislature is currently considering the following bills that would do the same: [S.B. 154](#) and [H.B. 540](#).

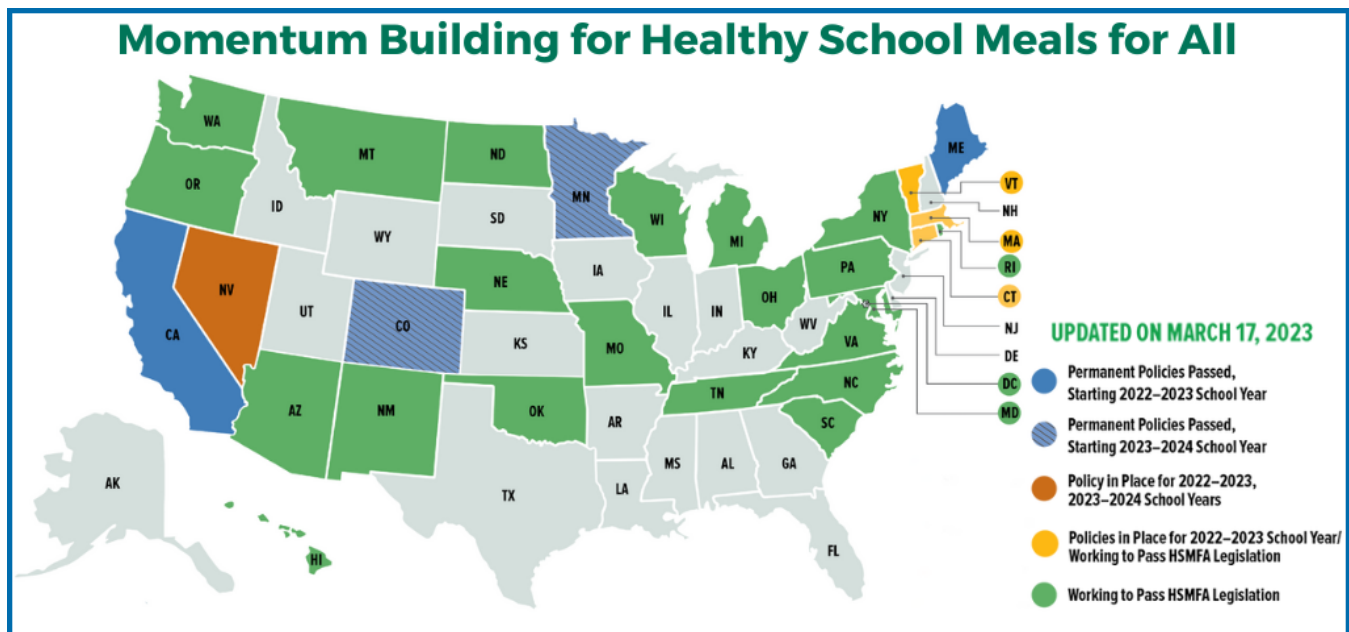


Image courtesy of the [Food Research & Action Center](#)

Estimated State Costs³

	Pre-pandemic participation rates ⁴	Projected participation rates ⁵
Breakfast only	\$1,504,764.00	\$1,686,840.44
Lunch only	\$17,750,687.40	\$18,957,734.14
Breakfast & lunch	\$19,255,451.40	\$20,644,574.59

³ Lost revenue from co-pays only. Does not take into account any changes in administrative costs.

⁴ Assumes SY 2018-19 average daily participation rates and SY2020-21 eligibility data for reduced price and paid students for all public and charter schools.

⁵ Assumes a 6.8% increase for lunch and 12.1% increase for breakfast over SY18-19 average daily participation rates for reduced price, and paid students (USDA estimates).

HAWAII
**HUNGER
ACTION**
NETWORK

Aloha Harvest

County of Hawai'i

Hawai'i Alliance for
Community-Based Economic
Development

Hawai'i Appleseed

Hawai'i Children's Action
Network

Hawai'i Food Bank

Hawai'i Good Food Alliance

Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Comprehensive Health Center

Lanakila Pacific

Malama Kaua'i

Maui Food Bank

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network is composed of advocates statewide dedicated to connecting communities and taking action to ensure all people in Hawai'i have enough food to live healthy, dignified, productive lives.

Senate Committee on Education
Wednesday March 22, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.
In Support: H.B. 540 – Relating to Education

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of H.B. 540 – Relating to Education, which would require the Department of Education's Hawaii Child Nutrition Program to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

School meals are one of the government's most powerful tools for delivering good nutrition to children.

Ensuring all students have equal access to nutritious meals is one of the best ways to promote their educational and emotional development, reduce behavioral problems in the classroom, and increase positive academic outcomes in our schools. The National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program are the two largest child nutrition programs and a recent study found that U.S. children receive their healthiest meals at school through these programs.

Universal free school meals are a lifeline to Hawai'i's struggling families.

For children specifically, Hawai'i had the second highest-food insecurity rate in the nation in 2021, at about 25%. Offering universal free school meals is a lifeline to Hawai'i's struggling families that make more than the income eligibility limit, but not enough to afford school meal prices. Federal eligibility requirements dictate that only students from households earning below 130% of the federal poverty level (\$44,850 annually for a family of four in 2023) are eligible for free school meals in Hawai'i. Yet, a household survival budget for a family of four is more than \$90,000.

A universal free school meals program is cost efficient and effective.

Implementing universal free school meals:

- Alleviates a significant financial and administration burden for school nutrition staff which allows for more time to focus on preparing and serving healthy meals to students; and
- Means that schools no longer have to collect unpaid meal fees from families and no child is denied a meal based on the ability to pay.

Forecasting a potential increase in school meal participation if universal free school meals are implemented, local advocacy organizations estimate the cost of universal free school meals to be \$20.6M annually.

To lessen the cost of universal free school meals to the state we encourage the Committee to amend sections 1 and 2 to include language that ensures that federal funds are leveraged as efficiently as possible. Such as: *“It is the intent of this section that the state and participating schools maximize the use of all available federal funds, federal programs and federal provisions (such as the Community Eligibility Provision) in carrying out this program.”*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 10:17:47 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni DeFranco	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

This is Keoni DeFranco and I am testifying in support of HB540. It is critical that our state invests in the health and well begin of our student. They are the future of Hawai'i's potential economy growth.

We must ensure we are providing universal free school breakfast and lunch to all public and public charter school students.

There is no more important investment we can be making as a community, a Lahui as as a State Government then ensuring our students are being fed for free daily. There is a direct coorelation with student's eating regularly (and healthy) and test scores.

Mahalo for your consideration



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Senate Committee on Education
Re: HB 540, HD1 - Relating to Education
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 22, 2023, 3:00 PM

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 540, HD1, relating to the education**. This bill requires the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students, beginning with the 2023-24 school year.

Currently, students qualify for free lunch in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) if their families earn up to 130% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and for reduced-price lunch if their income is between 130% and 185% of the FPL.

HCAN Speaks! Board of Directors

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Erica Yamauchi

Especially with the FPL underestimating the true extent of poverty in Hawaii,¹ many families that pay the full price for school meals can't make ends meet. For example, a family of four that makes \$60,000 per year doesn't qualify for free or reduced-price lunch,² while the "bare-minimum costs of basic necessities" for that same family is more than \$100,000, according to *ALICE in Hawai'i*.³ If that family has two students eating breakfast and lunch at school, they must pay about \$1,300 per year for those meals.

The case for universal free school meals is strong.⁴ Schools benefit from reduced administrative burdens because they no longer need to collect school meal applications or meal payments. Students see better academic performance and nutrition. Currently 92 DOE schools and 14 charter schools already provide universal free breakfast and lunch,⁵ as did all schools earlier in the pandemic, thanks to federal COVID funding.

We estimate that it would cost about \$19.2 million per year to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students, if there's no increase in participation. That's based on the free, reduced-price and paid student participation in school meals in Hawai'i during the 2018-19 school year⁶ and the current school meal prices.

Mahalo the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://hiappleseed.org/blog/official-poverty-data-obscures-reality-in-hawaii>
² <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/StudentHealthResources/Pages/FreeReducedLunch.aspx>
³ <https://www.auw.org/sites/default/files/pictures/ALICE%20in%20Hawaii%20-%202022%20Facts%20and%20Figures%20Full%20Report.pdf>
⁴ <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/forefront.20220504.114330/>
⁵ <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/StudentHealthResources/Pages/CEP.aspx>
⁶ <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SchoolMealsReport2022.pdf>



March 21, 2023

Sen. Michelle Kidani, Chair
Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

RE: Testimony in support of HB 540, Relating to Education

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawaii Foodbank, **I support HB 540**, which would require the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students.

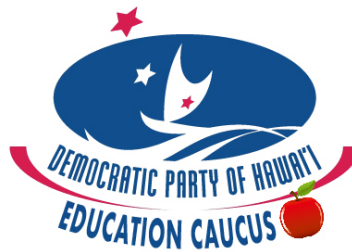
Hawai'i has the second highest rate of child food insecurity in the nation, with one in four children lacking comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. We also have the highest cost of living, and many families who struggle to make ends meet pay full price for their children's meals because they do not meet federal poverty limits. Universal school meals have been linked to improved student health and academic performance, and this bill would both improve keiki nutrition and take financial pressures off of Hawai'i families. Local advocacy organizations estimate the cost of this to be \$20.6M a year – this is an extremely important investment in our keiki.

The Hawai'i Foodbank gathers donated, rescued, and purchased food and distribute it to those in need through our network of more than 200 agency partners. We are also committed to reducing child food insecurity, and we support more than 30 school pantries as well as summer and after-school feeding programs. We strongly support this bill and its effort to ensure our keiki are healthy and ready to learn.

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

Amy Miller Marvin
President and CEO, Hawaii Foodbank



HOUSE BILL 540, HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION

MARCH 22, 2023 · SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
· CHAIR SEN. MICHELLE N. KIDANI

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 540, HD1, relating to education, which, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, requires the Department of Education to provide free lunch to all enrolled students.

Hungry children can't learn.

A recent study released by the National Bureau of Economic Research focused on the federal National School Lunch Program's Community Eligibility Provision, which allows schools where many students qualified for free or reduced-price meals to provide a free meal to all students. The study examined whether the provision of schoolwide free meals through the Community Eligibility Provision impacted school suspension rates and **estimated that the chances of being suspended multiple times fell in both elementary school and in middle school.**

Moreover, a 2021 study by the Brookings Institute found that schoolwide free meals improve math performance. This is further bolstered by research conducted by the Food Research and Action Center, which has noted that **students who participate in school breakfast programs have improved attendance, behavior, academic performance, and achievement.** Studies have

clearly demonstrated the link between school meals and student success, which is especially important as schools and educators continue to strategize how to combat the loss of opportunity to learn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, providing free school meals will improve overall health outcomes, both now and in the future. Thirty million students rely on schools to provide them with breakfast and lunch every day in the United States. Those who participate in the school meal program consume breakfasts and lunches of higher nutritional quality than nonparticipants and are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables. **Participation in the school breakfast program is associated with lower body mass index (BMI), lower probability of being overweight, and a lower likelihood of obesity.**

More Americans are sick than they are healthy: half of adults have diabetes or prediabetes; more than half of adults have cardiovascular disease; and 3 in 4 adults are overweight or obese. Healthcare costs account for 29 percent of state budgets and 28 percent of the federal budget. As the National Education Association has stated, through universal free school meals programs, “We can grow generations of healthy eaters and save our country billions.”

Notably, school meals cost less per student when more students participate in a free meal program. An article entitled in *Nutrients* entitled “Universal Free Meals Associated with Lower Meal Costs While Maintaining Nutritional Quality” found that **schools that participated in a universal meal program spent 67 and 58 cents less per lunch and breakfast**, respectively, while maintaining the same nutritional quality. Cost savings are especially important as many schools may face continuing budget cuts.

Nutrition is essential to academic success. This bill will ensure that Hawai'i's keiki are healthy and ready to reach their full potential.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

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Bill South
Michael Vernon
P.O. Box 23404
Honolulu
Hawaii 96823

March 20, 2023

TO: Chair Kidani and Members of the EDU Committee

RE: HB 540 HD1 Relating to Education

Support for Hearing on March 22

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in 1947 by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support this bill as it would provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students. This would do two things. First it would ensure all children are fed a couple meals a day. Second it would eliminate any possible stigma to getting free meals.

Sincerely,

John Bickel, President



Senate Committee on Education

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB540 HD1

Wednesday, March 22nd, 2023 3:00 p.m. Conference Room 229

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Members of the Committee,

HAPA supports HB540 HD1 which, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, requires the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students.

Nutrition is essential to all growing children and teenagers. It has been shown to vastly improve academic outcomes. However, there are still up to one in four children in Hawai'i that regularly go without enough nutritious meals at home. This means that for many children in Hawai'i, school breakfast and lunch are the most nutritious meals they get in a day. Being able to feed all students regardless of need at no cost to the students allows for us to remove the stigma of being on "Free/Reduced Lunch" programs, and also removes a huge burden from parents who will no longer have to worry about making sure their children are able to eat while at school.

Please support HB540 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director



TESTIMONY HB540 HD1

March 21, 2023

Comments Only

Aloha Representative Woodson – Chair, Representative – Marten Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Network supports the intent of HB540 HD1 with comments. Because charter schools do not receive facilities funding, many do not have access to USDA approved kitchens. Federal reimbursements for school breakfast and lunch require the appropriate meal be cooked in an appropriate certified kitchen or the school does not qualify for food reimbursements provided by the federal government. Many of our rural charter schools do not have qualified kitchens in their communities and some DOE school cafeterias refuse to serve those charter school children.

This issue has nothing to do with the Charter School Commission and we do not need them to adopt any rules or policies.

Public Charter School students general fund per-pupil allocation and your good work to maintain the integrity of the charter school funding formula in recent years, is the only portion of resource equity public charter school students receive. Charters must transport, house, feed, and educate the children with the per-pupil provided by the legislature and are not allowed to charge tuition. The per pupil does not support the basic human needs of the child. Equity has not been achieved with regard to federal funding distribution, facilities, transportation and food. If charter schools have to pay for the meals without reimbursement it will be a huge financial hardship added to an already underfunded public educational sector of Hawaii.

Please consider amendments to HB540 HD1 to ensure successful implementation is achieved to feed our children without financially harming the economically struggling charter schools. Perhaps a provision mandating the nearest DOE approved kitchen must provide meals to the charter school in the short-term and/or in the long-term provide facilities funding so we can provide it for the children ourselves.

Please call on me if I can answer any questions you may have. Mahalo for your time and service to our communities,

Taffi Wise, Vice President of Legislative Affairs

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Taffi Wise".



To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 3:00PM

RE: **HB540, HD1 Relating to Education- Support**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB540, HD1**. This measure, as amended, requires the Department of Education and all public charter schools to provide breakfast and lunch, free of charge, to all enrolled students beginning school year 2023-2024 and appropriates funds.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai`i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately half of our membership are keiki. We are Hawai`i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person care.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity has grown exponentially negatively impacting our local families. With 1 in 6 keiki facing hungerⁱ we need to invest in long-term solutions to support our most vulnerable populations. Providing free meals to Hawai`i's students is a step in the right direction.

Proper nutrition is vital for keiki growth and development and reduces the risk of various health conditions. This measure would ensure every student has access to healthy meals that they may otherwise be denied due to inability to pay or their household's income being even slightly over the income requirements to participate in the free or reduced lunch program. Providing meals for all students, regardless of household income, would create a sense of equality among students.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB540, HD1**.

ⁱ <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hawaii>

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 540 HD 1, which would appropriate funds to cover the costs of school lunches for all students in our state.

I'm Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin and I teach STEM & Computer Science at Ilima Intermediate School in Ewa Beach. My school is a Title 1 school - which means we get extra money from the federal government to support our students because many of the families we serve have income at or below the poverty line. **Teachers like me unequivocally support this bill, and commend Hawai'i State Rep. Scot Matayoshi for bringing it forward.**

Teaching during the pandemic was difficult but I never had to worry about if my students were hungry because the state was providing free breakfast and lunch for all students. As a teacher, it made me wonder why it couldn't always be like this. If you work with or have your own teenagers, you know that "hangry" (being grumpy when you're hungry) is a real thing, and I noticed less of these behaviors when students had access to free meals on campus. This year the free meal program ended, and many of my students were devastated. They had learned to count on those meals.

To qualify for "free/reduced lunch" at school families must fill out an application that basically says, "I can't afford to feed my child." These forms can be complicated and difficult for families to complete if English is not their primary language, not to mention humiliating to proud families who are doing the best they can for their kids. Hawaii families work hard to care for their children - in the nation's most expensive state to live in.

It upsets me, as a teacher and as a human, that we require parents to admit in writing that they cannot afford to feed their children, in order for children to be fed at school. There are also harmful community stories that stop families from filing out the free school lunch application forms - such as filing out these forms could get you visited by child welfare services or put potential citizenship papers at risk. While these stories are not true, the fear stops families from accessing key nutrition opportunities for their students.

To me, school breakfast and lunch are two of the most powerful learning tools out there. We have years of data that tells us that hungry students do not learn and retain information at the same level as their peers who have access to nutrition.

According to testimony submitted by the HDOE this session, student lunch debt this year is over \$100,000. Lunch "debt" is particularly nefarious because students have no way to pay these debts on their own; they are children. Recently, a student quietly brought their friend to my classroom at lunch, and the student was visibly upset because they had picked up their lunch tray and had it taken away by a cafeteria worker because they didn't have money in their account to pay. The friend knew to bring the student to me, because I keep snacks and food in my classroom for hungry students. **What does it say about us as a society if we tolerate publicly shaming kids (for something they can't control) and then leaving them hungry?**

This is the reason that many teachers, like myself, buy snacks for our students, taking money away from our own families (due to meager teacher salaries) to feed our students so they can learn. My husband rolls his eyes at Costco when I add food to our cart for my students, but he also knows (as teacher-husband), not to fight with me about feeding kids. You see, as the oldest of 5 children to a single mother, I was a “free lunch” kid who counted on meals at my public school to feed myself and my younger siblings. I can testify firsthand to the overwhelming benefit of free meals at school.

I also want to add that while some of my students might not have much to eat, they always share what they do have; it’s the “aloha spirit” in action. I received a few boxes of chopsticks funded by a DonorsChoose grant (to encourage students not to use single-use plastics), and every lunch period kids will come pick up a few sets to share saimin bowls at lunch. Sometimes you’ll see 4 students sharing 1 bowl and seeing these kids share their food always makes me mindful. **In the midst of failing nutrition policy, our kids have organized themselves to provide community care and feed each other. Shouldn’t the adults, leaders and policymakers learn from this example?**

Please support this bill. Please visit campuses at mine during lunch times to see what it’s really like for students.

Mahalo for Your Time,

Sarah “Mili” Milianta-Laffin
Ilima Intermediate School Teacher

PS: I was quoted in a recent KHON 2 news piece about student hunger. [See the story here.](#)



HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 1:06:11 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine A Villaflor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am 100% in support of this bill and strongly believe that we should be making sure the nutritional needs of our keiki are met while in school.

Please use my tax dollars towards feeding kids while they are in school.

Mahalo,

Christine Villaflor

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 1:47:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Comfy Ferrari	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kids deserve free lunches, I am still appaled this isn't a thing.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 10:07:34 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas-Ryan Cleek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

Mahalo nui to the House of Representatives for considering this bill.

Feeding Hawaii's children by providing free breakfast and lunch will undoubtedly improve the education potential of Hawaii's poorest children. Not only will it improve overall health of needy children, but it will make it possible for all children to focus on their school assignments instead of where their next meal might come from.

I strongly support this bill, and I hope all in the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii do, too.

Mahalo nui loa,

Thomas-Ryan Cleek

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 6:43:28 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Here is a statement that all in Hawai'i should agree on: No keiki should go to bed hungry. Yet the shocking fact is that one out of every three children in the islands struggles with hunger. To put it another way, five children in an average classroom of 15 go to bed hungry each night in Hawai'i.

A hungry child can't learn. Sadly, many of Hawai'i's families can't afford to provide their children with a healthy breakfast and lunch each day. Students who skip breakfast or lunch have a harder time learning. Lack of access to nutritious food has been shown to lead to poorer educational attainment, poorer health outcomes and poorer future financial security.

Investing in universal, free school meals is an investment in our collective future. The keiki who grow up benefiting from this program are the next generation of leaders in the making. It's inexcusable that, each year, so many keiki go hungry in our state. Let's fix that. It's the right thing to do. Please support HB540 HD1.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 6:26:58 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please pass this bill. Free school meals for charters and public schools ensure all children have access to essential resources that allow them to maintain health development and growth. When we provide the basics, we make space for children to experience more full and well lives. They are worthy of this.

Mahalo,

Noel

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 11:27:31 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Karjala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB540. It is essential that we provide nutrition to ALL students in both public and charter school environments, regardless of ability to pay. Please support this legislation!

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 8:28:43 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Ramirez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please pass this bill to feed all the keiki for free at school! We know that children are better able to learn when they aren't hungry and we know that many families in Hawai'i have a hard time with the expensive cost of food here. This is an obvious solution to improve the education and health of the children of Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui!

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 6:44:39 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dagan Bernstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an educator I see first hand the impact that having access to food can have on learning. This bill will ensure that all students will have the opportunity to be feed as part of their learning experience at our public and public charter schools.

I am submitting testimony in support of this bill.

The UN sustainable development goal number 2 Goal 2 is about creating a world free of hunger by 2030. This bill will ensure that the keiki of Hawaii are on track to reach this goal.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 7:22:23 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl Burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wholeheartedly SUPPORT this bill which will, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, require the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students. Appropriate funds. COMMEND and SUPPORT. Huge step forward

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 10:21:17 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Kern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 18, 2023

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Kern and I am a resident of Lihue, Kauai and a teacher at Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School. I am testifying in strong support of HB540 to provide free lunch to all enrolled students beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Students should not have to worry about whether they have money in their lunch accounts each day. Teachers, administrators, and other school staff should not have to spend our own money providing meals for students when they don't have funds in their accounts. All students should have access to healthy meals at school every day so that they can have the nourishment they need to focus on their academic and personal growth. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Mahalo nui loa,

Sarah Kern

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 10:17:27 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barryn Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of a free breakfast and lunch program for students. This is common sense. I'd question the motivations of any legislator that opposes this.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 7:40:38 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawena Lauriano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in supporting of HB540. Keiki need to eat when they are learning and no family deserves to go into debt over lunch. These are the kinds of initiatives I would like to see my taxes fund.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 11:07:03 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hunter Heavilin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for Hawaii bill HB540 Education. This bill requires the department of education and public charter schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. According to Feeding America, a national network of 200 food banks, 1 in 6 children in Hawaii face hunger. Of those more than 50,000 children, 44% are likely ineligible for federal nutrition programs due to household incomes being above 185% of poverty. Learn more at: <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/child/hawaii>

This is a critical step in ensuring that all students have access to healthy and nutritious meals, which is essential for their academic success. Additionally, this bill can benefit local agriculture through increased purchasing of locally sourced food.

By providing free breakfast and lunch to all students, we can help ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed in school and in life. Furthermore, this bill can help support local farmers and businesses by increasing the demand for locally sourced food. Beyond the potential benefit to our agricultural economy, providing this critical social safety net is a moral imperative and a critical piece of addressing household food insecurity, which will improve the health and well-being of our communities.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 11:39:13 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Weygan-Hildebrand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings!

I write to support those children and youth who should never be ashamed nor should be shamed by others because they cannot afford a school meal. A school should always be a safe space to learn positive values, especially in providing for basic human needs.

In addition, we must encourage self-worth through self-empowering activities which can be incorporated in school subjects and curricula. Those that revolve around food include:

- Not wasting food.
- Recycling leftovers.
- Food safety science.
- Food nutrition and well-being
- Cultural and historical appreciation of food cultures represented by students' diversity
- The science, culture, industrial arts and home economics of school and home gardening.

Mahalo.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 6:34:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Fukuzono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an Educational Assistant for the Special Education department at an elementary school in Waipahu. Every day I am in contact with students who would benefit from universal free breakfasts and lunch. Some students need the assistance for reasons like their parent's income is just above the criteria to qualify for free meals. Many students and their families fit in this category at my school, my family included.

Another need I see for universal free meals in schools is for the nutrition. I cannot tell you how many students get sent to school with a bag of chips or bag of candy for the day. Whether that's all that student's parents could afford, whether that's all they had time to provide, or whether those parents think that bag of chips/candy is sufficient nourishment for their child throughout the school day. These are numerous ways free school meals will benefit students and their families.

Every classroom in every school I have previously and currently worked in has a snack drawer or container. The contents of which is provided by the teacher of that room. Granola bars, muffins, breakfast bars, goldfish, every classroom has some variation. Go into any classroom in any school and ask to see their snacks. They're in there. The teachers see a need to provide food and nourishment for students, so they do. Please take this burden off teachers, off the parents, off the students themselves, and provide free school meals for every student.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 6:05:34 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley Mika Ito-Macion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I don't submit testimony vert often, but when I do.. it's for the most important issues that I feel impact not only myself or my family, but a community as well. This is one of those bills that I know will impact just not my household, but thousands of households across the state. I'm a 10 year teacher and have worked at only two schools. My son has been in the public education system for 10 years as well now. In the beginning years of his life, I struggled to provide money for school lunch for him and even more so, home lunch. Even now, with a two-income household, we are still struggling to put money in his account. I would much rather support the cafeteria workers, the aides that help at lunch, the kitchen staff, the whole ecosystem of the PUBLIC school system. I want my child to buy school lunch to support our schools in other ways than fundraisers, activities, or parent nights. I don't think many people see buying school lunch as a means to support their child's school. Let's change that. During the pandemic, when lunch was free, I saw many of my students who straved throughout the day, eat gratefully eat a school lunch and be excited for school. For them, it's part of being and feeling safe in their school space. I feel like this testimony is all over the place, but that's just how I feel about this. It's time we CARE about our students, our schools. We do something for the greater good. We work together to bring this bill into fruition and watch our students flourish. I stand with this bill.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 4:19:27 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Torres	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Natalie Torres, I am thirteen years old and today I saw some students here at Ilima Intermediate get their lunches taken away. Whilst I was inside the cafeteria I was helping out with inches being passed out. The lunch workers who had scanned some student's ID to pay but that child didn't have enough money so they took the lunch away from them and were very rude about it. I understand that is their job but it made me feel really bad inside because the students weren't able to eat. Please support this bill in order to help feed the hungry students around the district.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:10:58 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mehana Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of free meals for all DOE students.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 9:15:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Lalagos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee. My name is Natalie Lalagos and I am a resident of Kailua Kona. I am testifying in SUPPORT of HB540 because I believe that in order for all students to learn and grow they must have their basic needs met which includes daily lunch.

I am a high school teacher and I work with students from 9th to 12th grade. I have been a teacher for eleven years and have seen the impacts that not having a meal can have on student learning. Last year students had access to free meals every single day and a hungry student who could not focus or stay awake because they were so hungry was never an issue. This year, at least one student every day tells me how hungry they are or that they cannot eat because they "don't have any money on their account." These students are unable to focus and often struggle with learning because they have not eaten. I have experienced teaching in the classroom where this was not a concern and we must return to the thinking from that time where we believed that all students regardless of their financial situation deserved a meal. I ask you to support HB540 to ensure that all students have at least one meal every day so that they can live up to their full potential.

Mahalo nui loa,

Natalie Lalagos

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 9:48:57 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole Moylan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The cost of living in Hawaii is substantially higher than any other state. Inflation is surging in the United States and more than ever are food and living expenses at an all time high. In Hawaii, the average family can spend \$15,000 a year on food, making our state the leader among the other states.

Allowing food and meals for our island keiki in school will benefit everyone. Families are already struggling and getting beat by the costs of living. When families struggle to buy good food, they're forced to buy the cheaper stuff, thus rising our juvenile obesity rates and lowering the life expectancy.

Having readily available and nourishing meals for our keiki will benefit Hawaii in the long-term of things.

I support HB540.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 2:06:51 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Janice Lee and I am a resident of Pearl City. I am testifying in SUPPORT of HB540 because I believe that in order for all students to learn and grow they must have their basic needs met which includes daily lunch.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 7:13:24 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kannille Washington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the bill HB540.

LATE

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 3:03:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

LATE

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 10:01:13 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raechelle Villanueva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Mrs. Raechelle Villanueva

Community member, Wai`alae 4th Grade Teacher, public school parent

Regarding: H.B. No. 540

Report Title: School meals; universal free school breakfast and lunch.

Purpose: School meals shall be made available under the school meals program in every public charter school where the students are required to eat meals at school.

As a public school parent, it has tremendously helped my family when schools meals were paid for. The pandemic was tough for many of us who are in the working class. Now that I have long COVID, much of my medical treatment is not covered by insurance. Having meals covered for my own two daughter who attend public schools, was a tremendous relief. I am a tax payer and a frontline worker.

As a teacher, I have experience throughout my career, children who are hungry. For many, school meals were the only meals they received. During the Pandemic and even way back when we had Furlough Fridays, we would worry about food security for our students. Having the ability to feed children who are hungry makes a tremendous difference. No child should have to go hungry in school.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mrs. Raechelle Villanueva

LATE

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 9:15:25 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaili Swan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i am in strong support in HB 540 HD1 please pass this bill thank you.

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 8:05:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kecia McDonald	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Kecia McDonald and I am a public school teacher and single mother.

We all know that the optimal learning environment includes physical and emotional safety. Students simply cannot learn if they are hungry. While we cannot control what conditions they are facing at home, we do have the ability to provide optimal learning conditions for all students while they are at school. This includes supplying free breakfast and lunch to all students.

As a public school teacher who works in a Complex Area where every school is a Title I school, I can tell you that students are often looking for snacks, requesting food, and sharing food. To minimize the distraction of being hungry, we can provide meals and let them focus on their learning. If we have the means to improve their success and outcomes, why wouldn't we take this step? I urge you all to support this bill and help provide optimal learning environments for the students who need the most support.

Thank you, Kecia McDonald

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 4:32:31 PM
Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robyn Kato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am currently an Educational Assistant in elementary school. Previous to this position I was a substitute teacher for 13 years in elementary and middle schools on Oahu, Campbell/Kapolei Complex. I am in support of this measure as no child should go without meals. When a child is hungry, this can lead to many issues in the classroom. Students can have difficulty learning and focusing if they are hungry. Sometimes school is the only safe place for a student, and we should provide a meal or two for them.

LATE

HB-540-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 3:14:31 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/22/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Russo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure. Mahalo!

It takes a village to raise a child. Our children thrive physically, emotionally, and academically when they're provided food sustenance and data proves this. In this village, when children are students, it is our responsibility to take care of their needs and feeding them is a major need. Please help create an optimal learning environment for our village by supporting bill HR540. Watch our village EXCEL.

-Teacher/Mom/Villager
Akala Hanks

LATE