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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CIVIC EDUCATION.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that civic education  
2 prepares students to participate in the public and political  
3 lives of their communities. Teaching students about the  
4 importance of civic engagement through civic education helps  
5 develop critical thinking skills that are vital to the  
6 functioning of a democratic nation, including how to recognize  
7 social problems, evaluate possible solutions to problems,  
8 separate evidence-based claims from opinions, and act upon what  
9 is learned.

10           The legislature further finds that in the 2020 general  
11 election, forty states had a higher voter turnout than did  
12 Hawaii, which placed Hawaii among the ten states with the lowest  
13 voter turnout in the nation. The legislature also finds that  
14 cultivating social and political engagement among students  
15 through civic education is an important strategy available to  
16 increase voter turnout and citizen engagement over the long  
17 term.



1           The legislature additionally finds that in 2018, the board  
2 of education adopted the Hawaii core standards in social  
3 studies. These core standards outline the content, concepts,  
4 and inquiry skills students need to reason, wonder, and think  
5 about the vastness and richness of the human condition. The  
6 Hawaii core standards in social studies also integrate and  
7 encompass the democratic values, civility, and global  
8 perspective needed to support the development of critical  
9 thinking and habits of mind that are the hallmark of a mature,  
10 community-minded citizen. The standards are also premised upon  
11 a rigorous and relevant K-12 social studies experience.

12           The legislature finds that engaging students in the pursuit  
13 of active and informed citizenship will connect students to the  
14 world through informed instructional experiences that are led by  
15 teachers who are committed to active civic participation. In  
16 this way, students will not simply acquire and produce knowledge  
17 but will have the knowledge and skills to engage in the workings  
18 of a democracy and practice democratic citizenship. However,  
19 the legislature finds that the department of education has not  
20 engaged in systematic teacher training on the new standards nor



1 has addressed the paucity of culturally appropriate materials  
2 for historical and civic education.

3 The purpose of this Act is to increase access to civic  
4 education in Hawaii's public school system by:

5 (1) Establishing a Hawaii civic education trust fund for  
6 the educational benefit of students in the Hawaii  
7 public school system; and

8 (2) Appropriating funds for the expansion of civic  
9 education in public schools.

10 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
11 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
12 and to read as follows:

13 **"§302A- Hawaii civic education trust fund; established.**

14 (a) There is established the Hawaii civic education trust fund  
15 as a separate fund of the department. Moneys received from the  
16 State or county, private contributions of cash and other  
17 property, and the income and capital gains earned by the trust  
18 fund shall constitute the trust fund assets. The department  
19 shall be responsible for determining the moneys that would be  
20 deposited into the trust fund.



1        (b) The department shall have the sole responsibility for  
2 the administration and expenditure of moneys from the trust fund  
3 for the purposes of this section.

4        (c) The purpose of the trust fund is to serve as a  
5 repository for moneys intended for improving, and supporting the  
6 programs benefiting, the civic education of the students of the  
7 Hawaii public school system.

8        (d) The aggregate principal sum deposited in the trust  
9 fund, and any income and capital gains earned by the trust fund  
10 but not expended for grantmaking or administration, shall be  
11 invested by the superintendent in the State's investment pool to  
12 maximize the rate of return on investment of the trust fund  
13 consistent with the objective of preserving the trust fund's  
14 principal. The department shall be allowed to hire investment  
15 managers either within or outside of the department.

16        (e) In the event of the termination of the trust fund, the  
17 unspent appropriations made by the State, if any, shall be  
18 distributed to EDN100 (department of education, school-based  
19 budgeting).



# H.B. NO. 763

1       (f) The trust fund may receive contributions, grants, or  
2 gifts from corporations or other businesses, foundations,  
3 government, individuals, and other interested parties.

4       (g) The trust fund may receive contributions, grants, or  
5 gifts in cash or otherwise from all sources. The public and  
6 private sectors shall work together as partners in securing  
7 contributions for the trust fund. The State may allocate moneys  
8 to the trust fund by legislative appropriation.

9       (h) There may be an endowment component of the trust fund,  
10 as deemed necessary by the superintendent.

11       (i) The superintendent shall oversee the administration  
12 and expenditure of funds for the following activities:

13       (1) Grantmaking to raise awareness of the trust fund;

14       (2) Allocation of funds for the operations of the  
15 department;

16       (3) Allocation of funds for the civic education of the  
17 public school students of this State;

18       (4) Allocation of funds for programs that support the  
19 civic education of the public school students of this  
20 State;



1       (5) Allocation of funds for public school facilities and  
2       classroom resources relating to civic education;

3       (6) Allocation of funds for professional development  
4       programs relating to civic education; and

5       (7) Administration of the trust fund. The department may  
6       choose to hire outside of the department to administer  
7       the trust fund.

8       (j) The superintendent shall develop policies, plans, and  
9       strategies for the trust fund; publicize the trust fund; and  
10      solicit public and private moneys for the trust fund.

11      (k) For the purposes of this section, "trust fund" or  
12      "fund" means the Hawaii civic education trust fund."

13           SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$84,000 or so much  
15 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the  
16 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
17 2026-2027 for the expansion of civic education in public  
18 schools, including professional development and classroom  
19 resources related to the Hawaii core standards in social  
20 studies.



# H.B. NO. 763

1           The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
2 of education for the purposes of this Act.

3           SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$200,000 or so much  
5 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the  
6 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
7 2026-2027 for two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) permanent civic  
8 education resource teacher positions.

9           The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
10 of education for the purposes of this Act.

11           SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

12           SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY: *Amy Peruso*

JAN 17 2025



# H.B. NO. 763

**Report Title:**

Civic Education; Civic Education Trust Fund; Department of Education; Resource Teacher; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes the civic education trust fund to support programs benefiting civic education of public school students. Appropriates funds for the expansion of civic education in the public schools and for two full-time equivalent permanent civic education resource teacher positions.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

