
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO STUDENT ATHLETES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the benefits of
2 providing students with opportunities to participate in
3 athletics extend beyond improved physical fitness. Multiple
4 studies have concluded that student athletes tend to have higher
5 academic achievement compared to non-athletes and have suggested
6 that participating in sports improves discipline and time
7 management, resulting in improved grades, graduation rates, and
8 career outcomes. Studies have also shown that student athletes
9 experience better mental health outcomes including lower rates
10 of stress, anxiety, and depression and higher levels of
11 emotional well-being when compared to their non-athlete peers.

12 The legislature further finds that student athletes in
13 certain counties encounter difficulties in traveling to other
14 schools to compete. For example, as a multi-island
15 jurisdiction, Maui county students participating in school
16 sports face unique and burdensome challenges when attending
17 competitions within the county, including the cost of air or sea



1 travel and access to reasonable lodging accommodations.
2 Multiple days of travel are often required for Maui county
3 student athletes to attend competitions on a non-home island.
4 This requires significant fundraising efforts and logistical
5 planning, which may include chartering boats or planes, renting
6 multiple vehicles, recruiting volunteers on a non-home island to
7 house, feed, and shuttle students, coaches, and chaperones,
8 sleeping on gym floors, and relying on unhealth but convenient
9 food.

10 The legislature notes that the travel costs for student
11 athletes to compete within Maui county presents a significant
12 and unique financial and logistical burden for both the athletes
13 and their families, which may affect the ability of the student
14 athletes to compete at their highest form. The legislature
15 believes that providing a funding mechanism to cover
16 intra-county travel expenses of certain student athletes is
17 essential for ensuring equitable access to the opportunities and
18 benefits provided through participating in school sports and
19 athletics.

20 The purpose of this Act is to establish and appropriate
21 funds for a student athlete travel pilot program to provide



1 funds for intra-county travel expenses for student athletes of
2 counties with a population of less than five hundred thousand.

3 SECTION 2. (a) There is established a three-year student
4 athlete travel pilot program, to be administered by the
5 department of education, to provide funding for intra-county
6 travel expenses for student athletes of counties with a
7 population of less than five hundred thousand.

8 (b) The department of education may collaborate with
9 private entities and volunteers for the chartering or rental of
10 transportation and housing for participating students of the
11 pilot program.

12 (c) The department of education shall submit a report of
13 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed
14 legislation, on the student athlete travel pilot program to the
15 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
16 the regular session of 2028. The report shall include:

17 (1) The number of student athletes participating in the
18 pilot program;

19 (2) The total amount of funds used for the pilot program
20 and amount of funds used for each student athlete; and



1 (3) The companies the pilot program contracted with to
2 provide transportation to student athletes.

3 (d) The pilot program shall cease to exist on June 30,
4 2028.

5 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
7 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
8 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
9 year 2026-2027 for the establishment and implementation of the
10 student athlete travel pilot program pursuant to section 2 of
11 this Act; provided that the funds appropriated may be used for
12 the hiring of an athletic clerk to assist with travel
13 procurement and the implementation of the pilot program.

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

16 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000, and
17 shall be repealed on June 30, 2028.



Report Title:

Department of Education; Student Athletes; Travel; Pilot Program

Description:

Requires the Department of Education to establish and administer a three-year student athlete travel pilot program to provide funding for intra-county travel expenses for student athletes of counties with a population of less than 500,000. Appropriates funds. Repeals 6/30/28. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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