
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO COLLABORATE AND DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN TO PREPARE FOR HAWAII'S PURSUIT OF FUNDING FOR AND PARTICIPATION IN THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION'S PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE FOR ESTIMATING AUTISM PREVALENCE.

1 WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorder is a neurodevelopmental
2 condition that affects brain development and unfolds across an
3 individual's lifespan, impacting social communication, behavior,
4 and daily functioning; and

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6 WHEREAS, autism prevalence has increased dramatically, with
7 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now
8 estimating that one in thirty-six children in the United States
9 is affected, up from one in one hundred forty-nine in 2000; and

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11 WHEREAS, autism is estimated to cost the United States
12 approximately \$268,000,000,000 annually, covering medical,
13 therapeutic, and educational expenses, as well as productivity
14 losses for caregivers, with costs projected to increase
15 significantly in the coming years; and

16
17 WHEREAS, research suggests that Asians, Native Hawaiians,
18 and other Pacific Islanders have a higher prevalence of autism,
19 with an estimated one in thirty affected, making it crucial for
20 Hawaii to gather accurate data to address the needs of its
21 communities; and

22
23 WHEREAS, the CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities
24 Monitoring (ADDM) Network has been the primary source of autism
25 prevalence data in the United States, but Hawaii has never been
26 included in this national surveillance effort; and

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28 WHEREAS, the ADDM Network currently monitors autism
29 prevalence at sixteen sites across the continental United States



1 and Puerto Rico, using data from health and education records of
2 four- and eight-year-olds, yet Hawaii is not included in this
3 essential public health initiative; and

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5 WHEREAS, ADDM data collection has provided valuable
6 insights into autism trends, disparities in identification, and
7 gaps in access to services, and Hawaii's participation would
8 allow for a more precise understanding of autism prevalence and
9 impact among the State's diverse populations; and

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11 WHEREAS, discussions with the CDC have indicated that while
12 funding for new ADDM sites is not currently available, the CDC
13 is open to assisting in estimating autism prevalence across
14 Hawaii and training local teams in established public health
15 surveillance protocols; and

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17 WHEREAS, the federal Autism Collaboration, Accountability,
18 Research, Education, and Support Act of 2024 (Autism CARES Act),
19 signed into law on December 23, 2024, provides \$2,000,000,000
20 over five years, including \$28,000,000 annually for the CDC's
21 Developmental Disabilities Surveillance and Research Program,
22 increasing opportunities for Hawaii to seek future funding for
23 autism prevalence monitoring; and

24
25 WHEREAS, the Autism CARES Act also includes further
26 provisions to address disparities in autism identification and
27 access to services, ensuring that historically underserved
28 populations, including those in Hawaii, receive necessary
29 support; and

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31 WHEREAS, participation in the CDC's autism prevalence
32 estimation requires a coordinated effort among state agencies,
33 research institutions, health care providers, and education
34 professionals to establish surveillance infrastructure, ensure
35 data collection and reporting capabilities, and develop long-
36 term strategies for improving autism-related services; and

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38 WHEREAS, Hawaii's participation in systematic autism
39 monitoring should be recognized as an opportunity to attract
40 national attention and additional funding, ensuring that
41 families across the State can access the early intervention,



1 educational, medical, and vocational services needed to support
2 the success of children with autism; and

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4 WHEREAS, Hawaii also faces critical workforce shortages in
5 early intervention providers, special educators, pediatricians,
6 and broader allied health professionals, including speech
7 language pathologists and occupational therapists, particularly
8 on neighbor islands; and

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10 WHEREAS, an investment in training, recruitment, and
11 retention is necessary to support children with autism and their
12 families; now, therefore,

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14 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
15 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
16 of 2025, that the Department of Education, Department of Health,
17 and other relevant stakeholders are urged to collaborate and
18 develop a strategic plan to prepare for Hawaii's pursuit of
19 funding for and participation in the Centers for Disease Control
20 and Prevention's public health surveillance for estimating
21 autism prevalence; and

22
23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education,
24 Department of Health, and other relevant stakeholders are
25 requested to:

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27 (1) Identify necessary resources, training, and
28 infrastructure improvements to support comprehensive
29 data collection and analysis for the Centers for
30 Disease Control and Prevention's autism prevalence
31 estimation; and

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33 (2) Engage community organizations, health care providers,
34 and researchers to enhance autism-related services and
35 interventions based on the data collected; and

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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and
38 Department of Education are requested to establish public health
39 surveillance agreements and work toward executing the necessary
40 memorandums of understanding to facilitate autism data
41 collection; and



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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education and
2 Department of Health are requested to provide a joint report
3 outlining the steps taken and progress made toward participation
4 in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's autism
5 prevalence estimation to the Legislature no later than twenty
6 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026; and
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
9 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Superintendent of
10 Education, and Director of Health who in turn is requested to
11 transmit copies to autism advocacy organizations within the
12 State.
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OFFERED BY: _____



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