

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

342

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 12 2025**

RE: S.B. No. 789  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2025  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 789 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL CAFETERIA MEAL COSTS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to repeal the requirement that the Department of Education set school cafeteria meal prices at no less than half the cost of meal preparation.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Food Industry Association, Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, Education Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Public Health Institute, and one individual.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from one individual.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Education.

Your Committee finds that food insecurity impacts students in a myriad of ways, including reduced academic performance and short- and long-term health issues. For some students, meals provided at Department of Education schools are the only balanced, nutritious meal a student receives in a day. As meals are more



than nutrition for students, providing low-cost meals to students will improve the overall well-being of students while reducing financial strain on families. Your Committee further finds that with rising food costs statewide, repealing the requirement for families to pay for school meals may not be feasible at this time. Therefore, reducing the price of school meals may be more financially feasible for the Department of Education to sustain its school meals program while decreasing costs for students. Accordingly, this measure removes a significant barrier for students whose families have limited incomes while helping the Department of Education to serve healthy, nutritious meals to students.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Restoring existing statutory language that requires the price of school meals set by the Department of Education to be not less than one-half the cost of preparing the meals;
- (2) Amending the restored language to require the price of a school meal to be not less than one-quarter of the cost of preparing the meals;
- (3) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 789, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 789, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Education,



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MICHELLE N. KIDANI, Chair



