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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's working  
2 families face significant economic challenges, including the  
3 rising cost of living, inflationary pressures, and limited  
4 affordable options for basic needs. Access to nutritious meals  
5 is essential for students' academic success and overall well-  
6 being. However, the increasing cost of school meals may create  
7 challenges for many families and contribute to lower student  
8 participation in school meal programs.

9 The legislature further finds that encouraging more  
10 students to participate in school meal programs is crucial for  
11 promoting equity, ensuring students have access to healthy food,  
12 and fostering an environment conducive to learning. By reducing  
13 the financial burden on families, the State can help mitigate  
14 the impacts of economic hardship and support the health and  
15 academic achievement of Hawaii's keiki.

16 The purpose of this Act is to reduce the minimum revenue  
17 requirement for the department of education from the sale of  
18 school meals from one-half to one-quarter of the cost of

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1 preparing the meals, thereby making school meals more affordable  
2 for families and encouraging greater student participation in  
3 school meal programs.

4 SECTION 2. Section 302A-405, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
5 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

6 "(a) The price for school meals shall be set by the  
7 department to ensure that moneys received from the sale of the  
8 meals shall be not less than [one-half] one-quarter of the cost  
9 of preparing the meals. The prices for school meals may be  
10 adjusted annually based on the previous year's costs rounded to  
11 the nearest five cents; provided that the department by rule  
12 shall provide a lower rate or free meals to children based on  
13 their economic need."

14 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

17  
18 INTRODUCED BY: Nadine K. Nakamura  
19 BY REQUEST  
JAN 26 2026

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**Report Title:**

DOE; School Meals; Student Prices

**Description:**

Reduces the minimum revenue requirement that the Department of Education must recover through school meal charges in department schools.

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

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## JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Education

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.

PURPOSE: To reduce the minimum revenue requirement for the Department of Education from the sale of school meals from one-half to one-quarter of the cost of preparing the meals, thereby making school meals more affordable for families and encouraging greater student participation in school meal programs.

MEANS: Amend section 302A-405(a), Hawaii Revised Statutes.

JUSTIFICATION: Access to nutritious meals is essential for students' academic success and overall well-being. However, the increasing cost of school meals may create challenges for many families and contribute to lower student participation in school meal programs. This bill is needed to reduce the required cost recovery from meal sales, allowing the Department of Education to make school meals more affordable and accessible to more students.

Impact on the public: Reducing the financial burden on families, the State will help alleviate economic hardship while supporting the health and academic achievement of Hawaii's keiki.

Impact on the department and other agencies: The Department of Education will need to request additional funding to offset the revenue loss from this bill. However, increased student participation in school meal programs is anticipated, which will advance the State's educational and public health goals.

GENERAL FUND: None.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

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PPBS PROGRAM  
DESIGNATION: None.

OTHER AFFECTED  
AGENCIES: None.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval.