

JAN 21 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TEACHER WORKFORCE HOUSING.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a stable, qualified,
2 and supported teacher workforce is essential to ensuring that
3 the State's public school students receive a high-quality
4 education that meets their academic, social, and cultural needs.

5 The legislature further finds that the State continues to
6 experience persistent teacher shortages, particularly in public
7 schools classified as rural or underserved, where geographic
8 isolation, limited housing availability, and the high cost of
9 living create significant barriers to teacher recruitment and
10 long-term retention. Housing costs across the State have risen
11 dramatically in recent years, disproportionately impacting
12 educators whose salaries do not align with the cost of living in
13 the communities they serve.

14 The legislature further finds that many teachers in rural
15 or underserved areas are forced to commute long distances,
16 secure overcrowded or unstable housing, or leave the profession
17 altogether due to housing insecurity, resulting in disruptions



1 to school continuity and student learning. High rates of
2 teacher turnover negatively affect student outcomes, school
3 climate, and community stability, with rural and underserved
4 schools experiencing these impacts most acutely.

5 The legislature believes that targeted housing assistance
6 is an effective strategy to improve teacher retention, support
7 educator well-being, and ensure that public schools in high-need
8 areas are staffed with experienced and committed educators.

9 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a
10 teacher workforce housing stipend program to support the
11 recruitment and retention of teachers at public schools
12 classified as rural or underserved, strengthen the State's
13 public education system, and advance educational equity for
14 students across the State.

15 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended by adding a new section to part III, subpart E, to be
17 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

18 "§302A- Teacher workforce housing; stipend program;
19 rural and underserved schools. (a) There is established a
20 teacher workforce housing stipend program to be administered by



1 the department to support teacher retention at any public school
2 designated as rural or in an underserved area.

3 (b) An individual shall be eligible for stipend
4 consideration if the individual:

5 (1) Is employed full-time by the department in a public
6 school in an area designated as rural or underserved;
7 and

8 (2) Does not own a residence within commuting distance
9 from the school at which they are employed.

10 (c) Stipend recipients shall receive \$1,000 per month;
11 provided that stipends awarded shall be used only for rent,
12 mortgage payments, or utilities. Recipients of the teacher
13 workforce housing stipend shall submit annual documentation
14 verifying the usage of the stipend for housing purposes pursuant
15 to this subsection.

16 (d) Immediately following an award of a stipend, the
17 recipient shall commit to teaching at a public school in an area
18 designated as rural or underserved for a minimum of three years.
19 A stipend recipient may continue to receive a stipend pursuant
20 to this section following the completion of the designated



1 number of years; provided that the recipient continues to meet
2 eligibility requirements pursuant to subsection (b).

3 (e) If the recipient fails to satisfy the work
4 requirements in accordance with subsection (d), the recipient
5 shall repay the total amount of the stipend funds received as a
6 loan repayable to the department. The repayment shall be
7 subject to the terms and conditions set by the department.

8 (f) The department shall submit a report of its findings
9 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
10 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
11 the regular session for every even-numbered year, beginning with
12 the regular session of 2028."

13 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for
16 the establishment and administration of the teacher workforce
17 housing stipend program established pursuant to section 2 of
18 this Act.

19 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
20 education for the purposes of this Act.

21 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

2

INTRODUCED BY:

DKM



S.B. NO. 2082

Report Title:

DOE; Teacher Workforce Housing Stipend Program; Workforce Housing; Reports; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a Teacher Workforce Housing Stipend Program at public schools classified as rural or underserved. Requires the Department of Education to administer the program and report findings to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

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

