

Honolulu, Hawaii
, 2026

FEB 05

RE: H.B. No. 1770
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 1770 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Department of Education to establish a School Bus Driver Recruitment Grant Program;
- (2) Establish a School Bus Driver Recruitment Special Fund;
- (3) Establish a repayment signing bonus program;
- (4) Establish a School Bus Driver Outreach and Pathway Program; and
- (5) Appropriate funds for the established programs.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus and three individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General and Department of Education.



Your Committee finds that Hawaii continues to face a significant and persistent shortage of qualified school bus drivers, a challenge that has resulted in delayed routes, reduced service reliability, and, in some communities, the suspension of school bus services. Your Committee further finds that to become a school bus driver in the State, individuals are required to undergo specific training, testing, and licensing requirements. Access to services to complete these requirements remains inadequate, as they are concentrated on Oahu or located in limited locations.

Your Committee additionally finds that a comprehensive, statewide strategy to recruit, train, and retain school bus drivers is needed, especially for rural areas. This measure establishes a strategy that provides targeted financial incentives, which are necessary to attract new school bus drivers, support training and licensing costs, and build a sustainable pipeline of drivers.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language establishing standards for the distribution of the funds appropriated in this measure as grants under the School Bus Driver Recruitment Grant Program;
- (2) Deleting language that would have established and appropriated funds for a School Bus Driver Outreach and Pathway Program;
- (3) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

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 H.B. No. 1770, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1770, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Labor.



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



JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



HSCR 26-26

Bill/Resolution No.: HB1770	Committee Referral: EDN, LAB, FIN	Date: 2/3/26		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.				
The recommendation is to: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended (as is) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments (HD) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold <input type="checkbox"/> Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)				
EDN Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. WOODSON, Justin H. (C)	/			
2. LA CHICA, Trish (VC)	/			
3. AMATO, Terez	/			
4. EVSLIN, Luke A.	/			
5. GARRETT, Andrew Takuya	/			
6. KAPELA, Jeanne	/			
7. KILA, Darius K.	/			
8. OLDS, Ikaika	/			
9. MURAOKA, Christopher L.	/			
10. SOUZA, Kanani	/			
TOTAL (10)	10			
The recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation. committee acronym(s)				
Vice Chair's or designee's signature: _____				
Distribution: Original (White) – Committee Duplicate (Yellow) – Chief Clerk's Office Duplicate (Pink) – HMSO				