STAND. COM. REP. NO. 128 -26

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 10 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1879
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 Transportation, to which was referred H.B. No. 1879 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC TRANSIT,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

(1) Establish a Fare-free Youth Transit Program within the Department of Transportation, to be coordinated with the counties;

(2) Establish a Fare-free Youth Transit Program Special Fund;

(3) Require biannual evaluations of the program and special fund;

(4) Allocate a portion of the environmental response, energy, and food security tax to the Fare-free Youth Transit Program Special Fund; and

(5) Appropriate funds into and out of the Fare-free Youth Transit Program Special Fund for the program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Education; Department of Health; Department of Transportation; Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization; one member of the Honolulu City Council; Department of Transportation Services for the City and County of Honolulu; Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice; Hawai'i Youth Transportation Council; Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center; Ulupono Initiative; Get Fit Kaua'i; Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus; Hawai'i Public Health Institute; Hawai'i Bicycling League; O'ahu Youth Action Board; 350Hawaii.org; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Greenpeace Hawaii; Our Children's Trust; Earthjustice; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Taxation; Department of the Attorney General; and Hawaii State Energy Office.

Your Committee finds that access to public transit is essential for Hawaii's children and families, providing critical connections to education, employment, health care, and community life. However, current youth transit programs vary across counties, have complex eligibility requirements, and often exclude students who live within short distances from school or lack consistent access to fare-free services. These barriers disproportionately affect low-income, rural, and disabled communities. By implementing a statewide subsidized youth transit program that prioritizes certain youth, this measure would reduce financial burdens on families, increase transit equity, and support the State's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle traffic.

Your Committee notes the concerns raised by the Department of Transportation Services for the City and County of Honolulu regarding the distinction between public transportation and traditional school bus services and that the State cannot use county transportation services to provide school bus services.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

(1) Changing references to the "Fare-free Youth Transit Program" to the "Subsidized Youth Transit Program", including references to the associated special fund;

(2) Clarifying that the Subsidized Youth Transit Program shall prioritize youth who demonstrate financial or social need;

(3) Authorizing the Department of Transportation to adopt rules to establish verification procedures, coordinate interagency eligibility confirmation, expand eligibility under special circumstances, and prevent misuse or duplicate enrollment in the program;

(4) Clarifying that the Department of Transportation may expand program eligibility to all youth in the State, subject to sufficient funding and prioritization of youth who demonstrate financial or social need;

(5) Authorizing the Department of Transportation to consult with the Department of Education on best practices for the implementation and expansion of the program;

(6) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and

(7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Human Services & Homelessness, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider working with the counties and relevant state agencies to define the term "county transit agencies".

Your Committee further requests the Department of Transportation to gather feedback from each county on the potential impact of increased ridership of public transportation on the operations, costs, and vehicle maintenance where the Statewide Subsidized Youth Transit Program is to be implemented.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Transportation that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1879, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1879, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Human Services & Homelessness.

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

Committee on Transportation,

DARIUS KILA, Chair

State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
The Thirty-third Legislature

HSCR 128-26

Record of Votes of the Committee on Transportation

Bill/Resolution No.:	Committee Referral:	Date:
HB 1899	TRN, HSH, FIN	FEB 05, 2026

☐ The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.

The recommendation is to: ☐ Pass, unamended (as is) ☑ Pass, with amendments (HD) ☐ Hold
☐ Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)

TRN Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. KILA, Darius K. (C)	✓			
2. MIYAKE, Tyson K. (VC)	✓			
3. COCHRAN, Elle	✓			
4. EVSLIN, Luke A.	✓			
5. GRANDINETTI, Tina Nakada	✓			
6. KITAGAWA, Lisa	✓			
7. LA CHICA, Trish	✓			
8. MURAOKA, Christopher L.	✓			
9. PIERICK, Elijah	✓			EX TM
TOTAL (9)	9	0	0	0

The recommendation is: ☑ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted

If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation.
committee acronym(s)

Vice Chair's or designee's signature: Tyson Miyake

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