

Honolulu, Hawaii  
FEB 09 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 2168  
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. 2168 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require the Department of Education to:

- (1) Establish a program to identify, enroll, and support students who are experiencing homelessness; and
- (2) Designate a coordinator position and navigator positions to implement the program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions and two individuals. Your Committee received testimony in support of the intent of this measure from the Department of Education. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General and one individual.

Your Committee finds that children and youth who do not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence experience significant difficulties with enrollment, attendance, and academic



success. As the number of families and students experiencing homelessness in Hawaii increases, it is critical that students facing housing instability are provided with the access and support necessary to receive a quality education and achieve long-term success.

Your Committee notes that under existing federal law, students experiencing homelessness are afforded specific rights and protections that are designed to remove barriers to enrollment and participation in school. However, because of ongoing uncertainty at the federal level and the potential for changes to funding or statutory protections, your Committee believes that it is vital to protect these rights, benefits, and privileges in the State to ensure their continuity, regardless of future federal action.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:


- (1) Clarifying that the Department of Education shall:
  - (A) Designate a state coordinator for students experiencing homelessness to oversee the program; and
  - (B) Establish state navigator positions who shall operate under the direction and supervision of the state coordinator;
- (2) Specifying that the program shall ensure that students experiencing homelessness have the right to attend either the school serving the geographic area in which student resides in or the student's school of origin, regardless of necessary documentation;
- (3) Providing that the choice of school shall be based on the student's best interest and shall prioritize educational stability;
- (4) Clarifying that the program shall:
  - (A) Ensure that students experiencing homelessness have access to all available educational programs and services, including preschool and extracurricular activities; and



- (B) Provide training for administrators, counselors, teachers, and staff regarding the implementation of the program;
- (5) Establishing guidelines to address instances of a dispute over eligibility, or school selection or enrollment, in a school, for a student experiencing homelessness;
- (6) Deleting language that would have required the Department of Education to implement the program with available federal funds;
- (7) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (8) 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. 2168, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2168, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Human Services & Homelessness.

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

  
JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



HSCR 77-26

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 2168	Committee Referral: EDN, HSH, FIN	Date: 2/5/26		
<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)	9	1		
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: <u>Trish La Chica</u>				
Distribution: Original (White) – Committee      Duplicate (Yellow) – Chief Clerk's Office      Duplicate (Pink) – HMSO				