



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/05/2026  
Time: 02:00 PM  
Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Committee: EDN

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB2560, RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

**Purpose of Bill:** Establishes a two-year-pilot program within the Department of Education, to be headed by the State Coordinator for Education for Homeless Children and Youth, to provide temporary financial stabilization assistance to families with students identified as experiencing homelessness. Funds the program through the Department of Human Services using allowable Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the intent of HB2560 and the Legislature's focus on addressing the financial instability that disrupts educational access for students experiencing homelessness. While the Department recognizes that temporary financial stabilization is a critical tool for reducing barriers to school attendance, we have significant reservations regarding the proposed implementation framework and suggest a more streamlined approach to achieve the bill's objectives.

To ensure both fiscal accountability and operational efficiency, the Department respectfully recommends that the pilot program be established within the Department of Human Services (DHS) as the lead agency. As the primary administrator of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, DHS is better positioned to provide the expertise needed to ensure federal compliance and equitable disbursement of funds. Therefore, the Department recommends a referral-based model that would allow Department liaisons to identify families in need through existing protocols and connect them with DHS for formal eligibility determination and financial support.

By shifting the lead role in this pilot to DHS, the State can ensure each agency operates within its core expertise: Department liaisons will continue to serve as the vital link for student advocacy and identification, while DHS provides the professional fiscal oversight necessary for TANF-funded programs. The Department remains committed to supporting our most vulnerable students and looks forward to a partnership that maximizes resources for families in crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKALE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKALE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKALE

February 4, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
House Committee on Education

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2560 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill to utilize federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to support families of students experiencing homelessness, offers comments, and requests clarification. DHS defers to the Department of Education.

This bill proposes to establish a two-year pilot program within the Department of Education, supported by the Department of Human Services with federal TANF funds, to provide short-term, flexible assistance to eligible families of students experiencing homelessness.

Pursuant to section 401, Title IV-A of the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 601], states may utilize federal TANF funds for benefits, programs, and services that meet one of the following purposes:

- (1) Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
- (2) End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- (3) Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and

(4) Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

This bill proposes to provide temporary financial stabilization assistance, including food, clothing, transportation, and other short-term needs. These assistance payments may qualify under TANF Purpose 1; therefore, “means testing” must also be an eligibility criteria to receive federal TANF funded payments.

Additionally, in accordance with 8 U.S.C. 1611(a), an individual who is not a qualified immigrant is not eligible for any federal public benefit as defined in 8 U.S.C. 1611(c). Therefore, students and their family members who may receive assistance through the proposed pilot program must be either U.S. citizens, qualified immigrants according to the terms described in section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.], or are qualified individuals lawfully residing in the U.S. in accordance with section 141 of the Compacts of Free Association. Federal TANF funds may not be used to provide temporary financial stabilization assistance to students or individual members of their families who do not meet citizenship or qualified immigrant status requirements. If the legislature intends the pilot program to provide assistance regardless of a student’s or family member’s citizenship status, state funds will be required to serve non-TANF-qualified students and their families.

The Department’s TANF program provides monthly cash benefits to eligible families and administers the First-To-Work (FTW) program, which helps recipient families gain financial independence through vocational training and educational support, employment-related services, and supportive service payments, such as child care subsidies, transportation assistance, and education and work-related expenses.

Importantly, in October 2025, the Department launched the Hawaii Relief Program, which provides non-recurring short-term housing and utility payments to help families with dependent children who are in financial crisis or are experiencing an episode of financial need due to an extenuating circumstance such as involuntary loss of employment or reduction in earnings, natural disaster, or homelessness. The temporary financial stabilization assistance proposed through this pilot program may duplicate the payments the Department already issues through its TANF, FTW, and Hawaii Relief Programs, which will require coordination between DHS and DOE to avoid such duplication.

The Department requests clarification on Section 2, subsection (f), which states that funds distributed under the pilot program shall be used in a flexible spending model. The bill does not provide a definition or description of this model. Expending federal TANF funds must comply with the requirements and provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

The Department also requests clarification of Section 2, subsection (f), paragraph (4), which includes “other short-term necessities”. The Department is unable to determine whether “other short-term necessities” are payments that would be classified as “assistance” [45 C.F.R. 260.31]. There are additional federal requirements when a family receives federally funded “assistance,” including cooperating to establish paternity and child support payments if there is an absent parent of a minor dependent child; mandatory participation in the Department’s TANF work program; and administrative reporting requirements. For payments to be considered “non-assistance”, the payments must be non-recurrent and short-term; may not extend beyond four months; and the payments are provided to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need and are not intended to meet the family’s recurrent or ongoing needs.

Section 2, subsection (g), states that purchases for families and students using pilot program funds shall be made directly by the appropriate complex area community homeless concerns liaison. Subsection (h) further states that no direct monetary disbursements, cash assistance, or gift cards shall be provided to families or students under the pilot program.

As drafted, the Department requests clarification on how the pilot program intends to issue temporary financial stabilization assistance. If the intention is to provide the federal funded assistance payments to third party payees, on behalf of eligible families, then the pilot program must ensure third party payees are compliant with applicable federal, state, and county laws that in any way affect the payee’s ability to do business in the state, including compliance with the rules or regulations of the state Department of Taxation and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

Lastly, the Department recommends the following technical changes: Line 13 on page 5 is incorrectly labeled as “Section 2” and should be “Section 3”; Line 14 on page 5, the

February 4, 2026

Page 4

Department requests replacing the term “may” with “shall”; and Line 17 on page 5 is incorrectly labeled as “Section 3” and should be “Section 4”.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

**Judith F. Clark**  
48-218 Kamehameha Highway  
808-499-9966  
[Judithforceclark@gmail.com](mailto:Judithforceclark@gmail.com)  
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

February 4, 2026

To: Representative Justin Woodson, Chair,  
And members of the Committee on Education

**Testimony in Support of HB 2560 Relating to Homelessness**  
**(with recommendations for amendments)**

As a community advocate, the former Executive Director of Hawaii Youth Services Network, and a person with lived experience of youth homelessness, I support HB 2560

Homeless students experience many challenges and barriers in obtaining educational services. Providing financial assistance for food, clothing, transportation, and other services will remove barriers to homeless students' ability to attend school

This bill does not address the needs of unaccompanied youth who have equal need for this assistance. An amendment to create a mechanism for unaccompanied youth to participate in the pilot program would improve access to education for ALL homeless youth.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

  
Judith F. Clark, MPH

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 4, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
House Committee on Education

FROM: Jun D. Yang, Coordinator on Homelessness  
Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions

SUBJECT: **HB2560 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

**Hearing:** February 5, 2026, Time 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 309 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**AGENCY'S POSITION:** The Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) submits this testimony with comments on HB2560, which establishes a two-year pilot program to provide short-term, flexible financial stabilization assistance to families with students experiencing homelessness.

The purpose of this measure is to stabilize families with children experiencing homelessness by allowing the use of allowable Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to address immediate, short-term needs that directly affect housing stability and school attendance. The bill establishes a pilot program within the Department of Education, funded through the Department of Human Services, with defined eligibility criteria, spending limits, documentation requirements, and reporting provisions to ensure accountability and compliance.

SOHHS appreciates the intent of this measure and recognizes the importance of timely, flexible assistance to prevent family homelessness and reduce educational disruption. Early, targeted interventions can play a critical role in stabilizing families and preventing deeper

system involvement.

However, SOHHS respectfully defers to the Department of Human Services, Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division (BESSD), regarding the applicability, allowability, and compliance requirements associated with the use of TANF funds for this proposed program. DHS BESSD is the State's subject matter authority on TANF policy, federal compliance, and program administration, and is best positioned to assess whether and how TANF funds may be appropriately used for the purposes outlined in this bill.

SOHHS remains supportive of cross-agency efforts that strengthen prevention and stabilization strategies for families experiencing homelessness and looks forward to continued collaboration with the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, and county and community partners to ensure that any program implemented is effective, compliant, and aligned with statewide homelessness prevention goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure. SOHHS appreciates the Committee's consideration and remains committed to working collaboratively with the Legislature and partner agencies to advance effective solutions that prevent homelessness and support Hawai'i's families and keiki.

**HB-2560**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:33:50 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JR Dowd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is JR Dowd from Makiki and I am writing in strong support of this measure. As someone who works with students and families experiencing homelessness, this program could be a real life-saver for them. We need to open up more avenues to families receiving monetary support to keep them in their homes, help them to find new ones, or help them to get through a tough time. I think this pilot could go a long way towards doing that.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JR Dowd

96822