THE SENATE
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 864

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO STUDENT TRANSPORTATION.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that school bus service provided by the department of education is essential for getting students to and from school, particularly for students who lack other transportation options or face hardship in obtaining school transportation services due to economic difficulty. However, chronic bus driver shortages have led to the cancellation or consolidation of many school bus routes, reducing transportation options for families across the State.

The legislature additionally finds that at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, the department of education reported that among six bus service contractors statewide, an estimated eighty-seven additional drivers were needed to fully staff school bus routes. The department also noted that over the last school year, one hundred seventy-five school bus drivers have vacated their positions.

The legislature further finds that in August 2024, the department of education announced plans to temporarily suspend

one hundred eight bus routes serving middle and high school students in central Oahu and students of all grade levels on the east side of the island of Hawaii. The announcement marked the third year in a row that the department has canceled bus services at the start of the school year.

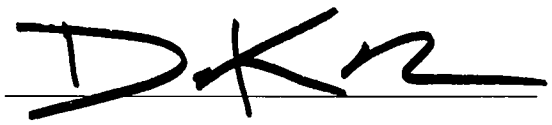
The legislature also finds that a lack of adequate school bus transportation service exacerbates chronic absenteeism and undermines student achievement, especially in rural, remote, and socioeconomically disadvantaged school communities.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish and appropriate funds for student transportation coordinators for each county to strengthen student transportation services across the State.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $400,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) permanent student transportation coordinator positions to strengthen student transportation services across the State; provided that each county shall have one student transportation coordinator.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

INTRODUCED BY: 

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Report Title:
Student Transportation Coordinators; Department of Education; Appropriation

Description:
Establishes and appropriates funds for student transportation coordinators positions within the Department of Education to strengthen student transportation services across the State.

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