

MAR 16 2026

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CREATE A PLAN THAT
REMOVES CARCINOGENS FROM SCHOOL MEALS.

1 WHEREAS, the World Health Organization's International
2 Agency for Research on Cancer has classified processed meats as
3 a Group 1 carcinogen because there is sufficient evidence that
4 it causes cancer in humans; and

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6 WHEREAS, processed meats include any meat that has been
7 modified through salting, curing, fermenting, smoking, or other
8 processes to enhance flavor or improve preservation; and

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10 WHEREAS, processed meats include hot dogs, bacon, deli
11 meats, ham, and pepperoni; and

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13 WHEREAS, processed meats often contain sodium nitrite or
14 sodium nitrate as preservatives and color fixatives, and in the
15 body, or during high-heat cooking, these compounds can form
16 nitrosamines, which are known carcinogens; and

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18 WHEREAS, children are especially vulnerable to the long-
19 term health impacts of poor diet, including increased risk of
20 chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and obesity; and

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22 WHEREAS, the Department of Education administers school
23 meal programs that serve tens of thousands of breakfasts and
24 lunches daily, some of which contain processed meats; and

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26 WHEREAS, providing students with healthier meals would
27 support their academic performance, physical development, and
28 long-term well-being; and

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30 WHEREAS, several school systems nationwide have already
31 taken steps to reduce or eliminate processed meats from their



1 menus, demonstrating that such a transition is feasible; now,
2 therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the
6 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
7 Education is requested to create a plan to transition school
8 meals away from processed meats and toward fiber-rich proteins,
9 completely eliminating processed meats by 2032 or at least
10 offering a whole-foods, scratch made, or minimally processed
11 plant-based alternative to processed meats; and

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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan include:

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15 (1) An inventory of existing school menu items containing
16 processed meats;
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18 (2) A proposed timeline for the reduction and eventual
19 phase-out of processed meats, or the offering of a
20 whole-foods, scratch made, or minimally processed
21 plant-based alternative to processed meats;
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23 (3) Nutritional standards and sourcing guidelines for
24 replacement options; and
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26 (4) Estimated costs and funding opportunities to support
27 the transition; and
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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
30 requested to submit a report of its findings and
31 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
32 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
33 the Regular Session of 2027; and
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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
36 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor,
37 Chairperson of the Board of Education, Superintendent of
38 Education, Director of Health, and Director of the School Food
39 Services Branch of the Department of Education.
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S.C.R. NO. 148

OFFERED BY: Karl Rhoads

