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# SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESILIENCE TO SUPPORT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S SECONDARY AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA PROGRAM.

1           WHEREAS, the State imports more than eighty-five percent of  
2 its food and is considered highly vulnerable in its food  
3 security; and  
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5           WHEREAS, to address this vulnerability, the State has  
6 adopted various food and agricultural self-sufficiency goals  
7 that necessitate strategic investment into the local  
8 agricultural sector and related trades, particularly through the  
9 expansion of education and training opportunities to address the  
10 State's declining agricultural workforce; and  
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12           WHEREAS, since 1930, the Department of Education's  
13 Secondary Agricultural Education Program, now known as the  
14 Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Program, and the  
15 companion agricultural leadership youth organization, Future  
16 Farmers of America, have supported the development of a  
17 qualified local agricultural workforce through an experiential  
18 educational curriculum; and  
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20           WHEREAS, through agricultural content, Future Farmers of  
21 America leadership training, and project-based learning known as  
22 the Supervised Agricultural Experience Program, this curriculum  
23 teaches students the application of science and academic skills,  
24 encourages civic engagement, and exposes them to diverse  
25 agricultural career pathways; and  
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27           WHEREAS, before 2000, the Secondary Agricultural Education  
28 Program had a robust presence in over thirty high schools and  
29 statewide Future Farmers of America enrollment totaled over  
30 eight hundred members; and  
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32           WHEREAS, since 2000, however, enrollment in the Program has  
33 declined due to policy shifts caused by the No Child Left Behind



1 Act of 2002, local loss of science credit for agriculture  
2 education courses, funding cuts due to implementation of the  
3 Weighted Student Formula, closure of the University of Hawaii at  
4 Manoa College of Education's Secondary Agriculture Teacher  
5 Degree Program, and loss of centralized content specialists  
6 because of adoption of the School/Community Based Management  
7 governance structure; and

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9 WHEREAS, despite this decline, increased student exposure  
10 to agricultural occupations through the emerging regional  
11 kitchen initiative and new school gardening and farm-to-school  
12 programs offers a unique opportunity to restore and develop the  
13 Secondary Agricultural Education Program; and

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15 WHEREAS, through immediate and targeted professional  
16 development, the State can support its food self-sufficiency  
17 goals and rising demand for agricultural producers and the many  
18 occupations that support agricultural production; and

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20 WHEREAS, employing an extension agent at the University of  
21 Hawaii at Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human  
22 Resilience offers an efficient professional development solution  
23 by performing outreach and creating a direct line of  
24 agricultural best practices to local schools conducting Future  
25 Farmers of America activities; and

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27 WHEREAS, many land grant universities have successfully  
28 deployed this model of establishing a pipeline from lower to  
29 higher education to quickly transfer agricultural technology and  
30 knowledge to teachers and students contemplating agricultural  
31 careers; and

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33 WHEREAS, the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of  
34 Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience, as one of the best  
35 tropical agriculture colleges in the world, is uniquely well-  
36 suited to housing an extension agent to enable a high-quality  
37 teacher workforce; now, therefore,

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39 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third  
40 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,  
41 that the Department of Education and the University of Hawaii at  
42 Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience are



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1 requested to support the Department of Education's Secondary  
2 Agricultural Education Program and the Future Farmers of America  
3 program; and  
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
6 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
7 Education, Superintendent of Education, and President of the  
8 University of Hawaii System.  
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OFFERED BY: *Mike Gabbard*

