

MAR 16 2026

SENATE 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

29
30 WHEREAS, several school systems nationwide have already
31 taken steps to reduce or eliminate processed meats from their
32 menus, demonstrating that such a transition is feasible; now,
33 therefore,



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

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan include:

- 12
13 (1) An inventory of existing school menu items containing
14 processed meats;
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16 (2) A proposed timeline for the reduction and eventual
17 phase-out of processed meats, or the offering of a
18 whole-foods, scratch made, or minimally processed
19 plant-based alternative to processed meats;
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21 (3) Nutritional standards and sourcing guidelines for
22 replacement options; and
23
24 (4) Estimated costs and funding opportunities to support
25 the transition; and
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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
28 requested to submit a report of its findings and
29 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
30 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
31 the Regular Session of 2027; and
32

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
34 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the
35 Board of Education, Superintendent of Education, Director of
36 Health, and Director of the School Food Services Branch of the
37 Department of Education.
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OFFERED BY: Karl Rhoads

