

MAR 10 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO EVALUATE AND RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LICENSING, TRAINING, AND WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS IN THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, reliable school transportation is essential to
2 ensuring equitable access to public education for students
3 across the State, particularly in rural and neighbor island
4 communities; and

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6 WHEREAS, persistent shortages of qualified school bus
7 drivers have resulted in route cancellations, service
8 disruptions, and barriers to consistent school attendance for
9 many students; and

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11 WHEREAS, transportation disruptions disproportionately
12 affect students with disabilities, students living in rural
13 areas, and families with limited access to alternative
14 transportation; and

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16 WHEREAS, the Legislature has considered measures to
17 strengthen recruitment, training, and retention of school bus
18 drivers, including financial incentives and workforce
19 development programs; and

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21 WHEREAS, testimony submitted to the Legislature has
22 identified structural limitations within the current student
23 transportation model that affect implementation of certain
24 workforce initiatives, including that school bus drivers are
25 employees of private transportation contractors rather than the
26 State; and

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28 WHEREAS, stakeholders and community testimony have also
29 identified barriers to entering the profession, including
30 challenges related to commercial driver's licensing access,
31 testing availability, training coordination, and geographic
32 inequities in licensing opportunities, particularly on neighbor
33 islands; and

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1 WHEREAS, the licensing and credentialing of school bus
2 drivers involves multiple agencies and processes, including
3 commercial driver's licensing requirements administered through
4 the Department of Transportation and workforce needs identified
5 by the Department of Education and private transportation
6 providers; and
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8 WHEREAS, improved interagency coordination and targeted
9 policy reforms may help expand the pool of qualified school bus
10 drivers, reduce barriers to entry, and strengthen the long-term
11 workforce pipeline; now, therefore,
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13 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
14 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
15 that the Department of Transportation, in coordination with the
16 Department of Education, is requested to evaluate and recommend
17 improvements to improve the licensing, training, and workforce
18 pipeline for school bus drivers in the State; and
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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the evaluation is requested to
21 include but not be limited to:
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- 23 (1) Access to commercial driver's licensing, including
24 geographic availability of testing, scheduling
25 capacity, equipment access, and barriers faced by
26 neighbor island applicants;
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- 28 (2) Coordination between state agencies, counties, and
29 private transportation providers in supporting
30 commercial driver's licensing, training, and
31 credentialing;
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- 33 (3) Opportunities to expand or decentralize testing and
34 training, including mobile testing units, regional
35 testing capacity, or partnerships with community
36 colleges or workforce programs;
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- 38 (4) Administrative or statutory changes that may improve
39 efficiency, reduce delays, or remove unnecessary
40 barriers in the licensing process;
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- 1 (5) Strategies to align licensing pathways with school
- 2 transportation workforce needs, including targeted
- 3 recruitment, pre-licensing training support, and
- 4 career pathway development;
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- 6 (6) Best practices from other states or jurisdictions that
- 7 have successfully expanded school bus driver licensing
- 8 pipelines; and
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- 10 (7) Any recommended legislative or administrative actions
- 11 necessary to improve coordination and expand the pool
- 12 of qualified school bus drivers; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
 15 Transportation and Department of Education are requested to
 16 consult with the Department of the Attorney General, Department
 17 of Labor and Industrial Relations, Department of Budget and
 18 Finance, county governments, school bus transportation
 19 contractors, workforce development partners, and other relevant
 20 stakeholders; and

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 22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
 23 Transportation, in coordination with the Department of
 24 Education, is requested to submit a report of its findings and
 25 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
 26 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the Regular
 27 Session of 2027; and

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 29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 30 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of
 31 Transportation, Superintendent of Education, Chairperson of the
 32 Board of Education, Attorney General, Director of Labor and
 33 Industrial Relations, Director of Finance, and the Mayor of each
 34 county in the State.

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 37 OFFERED BY: DKM

