

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17, 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1561
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 1561 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require public charter schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to provide free meals to students whose family income is no more than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the State Public Charter School Commission; Hawai'i State Teachers Association; Parents and Children Together; Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus; Hawai'i Public Health Institute; Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice; Hawai'i Hunger Action Network; Hawaii Food Industry Association; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Hawaii Youth Services Network; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Green Party of Hawai'i; Early Childhood Action Strategy; Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Health.

Your Committee finds that beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, Act 139, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, will expand free



school meal coverage to students of Department of Education schools whose family income is no more than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level. Your Committee further finds that similarly expanding free school meal coverage to public charter school students will ensure all children of families with economic need are provided a school meal.

Your Committee has amended this measure by changing the effective date to July 1, 3000.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1561, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1561, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,



JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



Record of Votes of the Committee on Education

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 1561	Committee Referral: EDN, FIN	Date: 2/10/26		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.				
The recommendation is to: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended (as is) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments (HD) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold <input type="checkbox"/> Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)				
EDN Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. WOODSON, Justin H. (C)	/			
2. LA CHICA, Trish (VC)	/			
3. AMATO, Terez	/			
4. EVSLIN, Luke A.	/			
5. GARRETT, Andrew Takuya	/			
6. KAPELA, Jeanne	/			
7. KILA, Darius K.	/			
8. OLDS, Ikaika	/			
9. MURAOKA, Christopher L.	/			
10. SOUZA, Kanani	/			
TOTAL (10)	10			
The recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation. _____ committee acronym(s)				
Vice Chair's or designee's signature: <u>Trish La Chica</u>				
Distribution: Original (White) – Committee Duplicate (Yellow) – Chief Clerk's Office Duplicate (Pink) – HMSO				