

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1779

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. 1779 entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to expand free school meal coverage to all Department of Education students, beginning with the 2029-2030 school year.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i State Teachers Association; Catholic Charities Hawai'i; Hawai'i Public Health Institute; American Heart Association; Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Hawaii Food Industry Association; Hawai'i Hunger Action Network; Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice; Parents and Children Together; Hawaii Youth Services Network; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Early Childhood Action Strategy; Edmar Castillo Photography; 50501 Hawaii and General Strike Hawaii; Lambda Law Hawai'i; Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received testimony in support of the intent of this measure from the Department of Education. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Health.



Your Committee finds that access to healthy meals are critical to academic success. Your Committee further finds that, to ensure students of families with economic need receive a school meal, Act 139, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, was passed to expand free school meal coverage to students who currently qualify for reduced-price lunch beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and expand coverage to students whose family income is not more than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. However, thousands of students across the State are still going hungry because of a lack of resources to guarantee consistent food security for themselves and their families. This measure ensures that all students in the State will be provided a school meal, regardless of their economic situation.

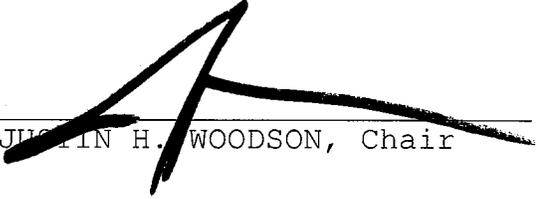
Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring public charter schools to provide free meals to every public charter school student, regardless of a student's eligibility for participation in a federal school meals program, beginning with the 2029-2030 school year;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

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. 1779, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1779, 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



