

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 30 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1934
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 1934, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO LIBRARIES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the State Librarian to establish an Imagination Library of Hawaii Program to provide one free book each month to children from birth through five years of age who reside in the State; and
- (2) Appropriate funds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i State Public Library System, Friends of the Library of Hawai'i, Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, and two individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from one individual.

Your Committee finds that low literacy rates hinder positive educational, social, and professional outcomes for local students, especially Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students, of whom



only thirty-five percent are currently meeting the Department of Education's language-arts proficiency standards. Imagination library programs, such as Ohana Readers, help families to build home libraries for children and have been proven to support early literacy and childhood learning. Statewide demand for the Ohana Readers Program, however, far exceeds current funding. This measure seeks to make a proactive investment in public education to improve long-term graduation rates and workforce readiness.

Your Committee notes the concerns expressed during the public hearing on this measure that the Imagination Library Program was originally created to address book deserts, supporting children in rural and underserved communities with limited access to alternative literacy initiatives. Due to the breadth of existing literacy programs, expanding the Imagination Library Program to all eighty thousand eligible children in the State through this measure, as written, may be an unnecessarily costly public expenditure with limited impact. Expanding this successful Program in high-need communities and restructuring certain provisions to lower costs may yield better outcomes for the public. Your Committee further finds that, while promoting literacy is an integral legislative goal, public investments should be directed to sustainable, high-impact, need-based initiatives, given the limited availability of funds. Accordingly, your Committee respectfully requests that subsequent Committees to which this measure is referred consider these issues as it moves through the legislative process.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting an effective date of July 31, 2055, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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. 1934, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



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

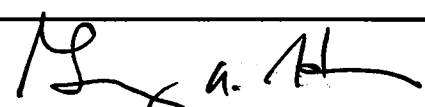


DONNA MERCADO KIM, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Third Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Education
EDU

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
HB 1934 HD 1	EDU, WAM	03/25/26		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
KIM, Donna Mercado (C)	✓			
KIDANI, Michelle N. (VC)				✓
FUKUNAGA, Carol				✓
HASHIMOTO, Troy N.	/			
DECORTE, Samantha	/			
TOTAL	3	0	0	2
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
				
Distribution:				
Original	Yellow	Pink		
File with Committee Report	Committee	Drafting Agency		

*Only one measure per Record of Votes