

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3391

Honolulu, Hawaii

**MAR 30 2026**

RE: H.B. No. 2296  
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. 2296, H.D. 1, entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to reduce the amount the Department of Education is authorized to charge for school meals to all students enrolled in department schools to no more than one-quarter of the cost of preparing the meals.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of the Governor, Hawai'i Public Health Institute, Hawaii Food Industry Association, Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, Hawaii Applesseed Center for Law & Economic Justice, and three individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Education.

Your Committee finds that one-in-three families in the State face food insecurity, leaving many students hungry throughout the school day. Well-fed students have demonstrated better academic performance, have improved concentration and behavior, and experience better long-term health outcomes. This measure seeks to support greater access to affordable nutritious meals,



therefore promoting superior outcomes for the State's children both inside and outside the classroom.

Your Committee further finds, however, that the Department of Education already fulfills notable obligations to provide meals to students based on economic need. In school year 2024-2025, the Department provided eleven million free school meals, compared to seven million full-price meals. This school year, free meal services have extended to students who qualify for reduced-price lunches, and next school year students from families earning up to three hundred percent of the federal poverty level will also qualify. Additionally, the student-cost of school meals is already significantly subsidized. According to the Department, in school year 2024-2025, students paid approximately twenty-eight percent of the total cost for each meal. Under this measure, the minimum amount the Department is authorized to charge for a school meal would be reduced from fifty percent to twenty-five percent of the cost of preparing the meal, compelling the Department to reduce current meal prices, and resulting in a larger financial burden for the State. Your Committee recognizes that the cost imposed on the State by this price ceiling would only rise over time as supply and labor costs increase.

Your Committee notes that S.B. No. 2615 (Regular Session of 2026), which was previously passed by the Senate, is a substantially similar measure that also amends the amount the Department of Education is authorized to charge students for school meals to increase affordability. Your Committee concludes that the language in S.B. No. 2615 is preferable because it does not place a cap on the amount the Department of Education may charge for school meals that will increase public expenditures.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting its contents and inserting the contents of S.B. No. 2615 (2026), a substantially similar measure that requires the Department of Education to charge not less than one-quarter of the cost of preparing a school meal for each school meal; and
- (2) Inserting an effective date of July 31, 2055, to encourage further discussion.



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. 2296, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2296, 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,

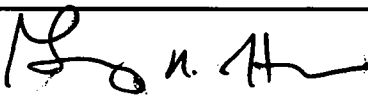


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DONNA MERCADO KIM, Chair



The Senate  
 Thirty-Third Legislature  
 State of Hawai'i

**Record of Votes**  
**Committee on Education**  
**EDU**

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
HB 2296 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	✓			
<b>TOTAL</b>	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