

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 02

, 2026

RE: H.R. No. 94
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.R. No. 94 entitled:

"HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, AND OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE TO ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE PEER COUNSELOR PROGRAM TO ADDRESS YOUTH LONELINESS AND SOCIAL DISCONNECTION IN HAWAII'S SCHOOLS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to urge the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Office of Wellness and Resilience, to establish a statewide peer counselor program to address youth loneliness and social disconnection in Hawaii's schools.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i State Youth Commission.

Your Committee finds that youth loneliness and social disconnection can negatively affect student well-being, engagement, and learning. Your Committee further finds that peer counselor and peer-support models have been proven to reduce stigma, strengthen belonging, promote early intervention, and improve school climate when implemented with appropriate training,



supervision, and referral protocols. Your Committee believes that the establishment of a statewide peer counselor program for high school students, as requested by this measure, will support the mental health of students, especially students experiencing loneliness and social disconnection.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requesting the Department of Education to implement the statewide peer counselor program for high school students in phases, beginning with pilot peer counselor programs in select schools determined by the Department, and to be conducted in an extended timeline to allow for adaptation, evaluation, and alignment with ongoing efforts; and
- (2) Amending its title to more accurately reflect its purpose.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.R. No. 94, as amended herein, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Human Services & Homelessness in the form attached hereto as H.R. No. 94, H.D. 1.

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

for Justin LaChica
JUSTIN H. WOODSON, Chair



