



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 2427, H.D. 1, RELATING TO UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

DATE: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 **TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 329

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Anne T. Horiuchi, Deputy Attorney General or
Randall M. Wat, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Marten and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

The bill: (1) entitles unaccompanied homeless youth, including runaway youth, with the rights, as provided by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (McKinney-Vento Act), to immediate enrollment in school, full participation in school activities, and access to comparable school and educational services provided to other students; and (2) establishes a student-centered, safety-first protocol for unaccompanied homeless youth enrolling in or attending school.

Section 2 of the bill adds a new subpart to part II of chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). Proposed section 302A-A (page 4, lines 1-6) defines "unaccompanied homeless youth" as:

[A] child or youth who meets the definition of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 and is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian. "Unaccompanied homeless youth" includes runaway youth.

The McKinney-Vento Act, as amended, at title 42 United States Code section 11434a, provides that the term "homeless children and youths":

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(1) of this title); and

(B) includes—

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(2)(C) 1 of this title);

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 6399 of title 20) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this part because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

There is no definition for "homeless children and youths" in the HRS. The closest definition readily available, in section 346-361, HRS, defines "homeless" differently, as follows:

"Homeless" means:

- (1) An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence; or
- (2) An individual or family who has a primary night-time residence that is:
 - (A) A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
 - (B) An institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - (C) A public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as sleeping accommodations for human beings.

This term does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained under an act of Congress or a state law.

To the extent the Legislature intends to rely on the McKinney-Vento Act standard, explicitly incorporating wording from the definition in title 42 United States Code section 11434a would help provide clarity and support consistent implementation.

We would be happy to assist the Committee with wording that would incorporate the definition from the McKinney-Vento Act definition in a format consistent with the HRS.

Subsection (a)(1) of proposed section 302A-B (page 4, lines 7-11) provides that "[a]ny unaccompanied homeless youth shall be entitled to . . . [i]mmediate enrollment in school, regardless of the availability of documentation[.]"

This wording may conflict with section 302A-1154(a), HRS, which provides that no child may attend any school in the State unless the child presents documentation satisfactory to the Department of Health showing that the child has received the required immunizations against communicable diseases. The proposed wording also does not fall within any of the existing exemptions set forth in section 302A-1156, HRS.

If the Legislature intends to permit students who lack immunization documentation to immediately enroll in school, the bill should be amended to resolve this statutory conflict. Specifically, the Department recommends clarifying that students experiencing homelessness or unaccompanied youth shall be immediately enrolled even if immunization documentation is not available, provided that compliance with section 302A-1154, HRS, occurs within a reasonable period consistent with existing provisional attendance requirements.

Because section 302A-1155, HRS, already establishes a statutory framework for provisional attendance, including compliance timelines and public health safeguards, the Department recommends that the Legislature consider amending section 302A-1155 to expressly apply to students experiencing homelessness or unaccompanied youth who lack immunization documentation at the time of enrollment. Alternatively, the Legislature may amend section 302A-1154 or section 302A-1156 to provide for provisional enrollment of these students, or add a conforming provision to the new subpart of chapter 302A referencing section 302A-1155.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/17/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

Location: 329 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: HSH

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB2427, HD1, RELATING TO UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH.

Purpose of Bill: Entitles unaccompanied homeless youth, including runaway youth, with the rights, as provided by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, to immediate enrollment in school, full participation in school activities, and access to comparable school and educational services provided to other students. Establishes a student-centered, safety-first protocol for unaccompanied homeless youth enrolling in or attending school. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB2427, HD1, and offers comments.

The Department recognizes the importance of ensuring equitable access to educational supports for all students, regardless of housing status. Federal McKinney-Vento requirements mandate immediate enrollment, continued attendance, and full participation in school for students experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied youth.

To promote student safety and clarity, the Department recommends the following amendment that distinguishes between general notification for all unaccompanied youth and targeted referral for students in "runaway" status. This amendment prioritizes notifying the Complex Area Homeless Liaison for all unaccompanied students to ensure immediate educational advocacy and specifies referral to the Office of Youth Services (OYS) for runaway cases.

On page 5, lines 9-12:

(1) The office of youth services; and The school's assigned complex area homeless liaison, to ensure a student-centered, trauma-informed, and confidential response that prioritizes the youth's safety and well-being; and

(2) The schools assigned complex area homeless liaison, to ensure a student-

~~centered, trauma-informed, and confidential 12-response that prioritizes the youth's safety and well-being.~~ The Office of Youth Services in cases involving students of "runaway" status.

The Department anticipates that the implementation of this bill will facilitate a partnership with the OYS. By clarifying these roles, the Department can focus on maintaining educational continuity and support services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 16, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2310 – MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

Hearing: February 17, 2026, Time 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) strongly supports this administration bill, which makes an emergency appropriation to DHS for emergency food assistance to recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, expanded food distribution and delivery, and call center support during the 2025 federal government shutdown. Importantly, DHS requests an amendment to incorporate the Governor's request for additional funds to help cover costs resulting from the expiration of the enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits on December 31, 2025, which Congress did not renew.

DHS respectfully requests an emergency appropriation of \$30,748,126 in general funds to restore DHS program funding for state fiscal year (SFY) 2025-2026; the amount is comprised of \$14,248,126 used to address food insecurity during the 2025 federal government shutdown, and \$16,500,000 will be used to assist residents in continuing to afford health care coverage provided by the ACA.

The federal government shutdown from October 1, 2025, through November 12, 2025,

threatened food security statewide and disrupted federal programs, including the employment and compensation of Hawaii's federal workforce and contractors. During the shutdown, DHS faced significant operational challenges when the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, issued multiple instructions that caused considerable confusion about the amount and timing of the November distribution of SNAP benefits.

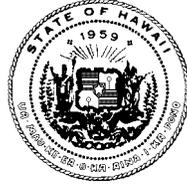
To ensure continued access to food for residents impacted by the shutdown, DHS redirected \$46,151,160 in general fund appropriations from multiple program IDs and established the Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program (HEFAP). The HEFAP provided a \$250 food benefit to eligible SNAP recipient households. Redirected funds were also used to contract with the Hawai'i Foodbank and its statewide network to increase food availability for the public; with Aloha United Way to provide call center support to assist residents in locating resources; and for DHS information technology services to facilitate benefit distribution.

As of November 25, 2025, DHS successfully issued the HEFAP food benefit to 81,399 eligible SNAP households, representing 161,549 individuals. The benefit cost for 27,406 eligible households with a dependent child, totaling 101,655 individuals, was covered with federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds. The remaining balance of \$14,248,126 in redirected general fund appropriations, specifically: \$11,807,126 for HEFAP, \$2,000,000 to support Hawaii Foodbank for purchase and distribution of food, and \$441,000 to the Aloha United Way for 211 call center support, must be restored to ensure that DHS programs can meet their SFY 2025-2026 obligations and to avoid incurring penalties and interest. We respectfully request that the measure be expedited.

The Office of the Governor is working with DHS to determine how to assist residents in covering the cost of health insurance available through the federal marketplace. Some residents who relied on the enhanced ACA tax credits to purchase health insurance are facing higher premiums and need assistance to maintain coverage. DHS requires an additional appropriation of \$16.5 million in general funds to implement this effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure and for the Legislature's support.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



LEANNE GILLESPIE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LUNA HO'OKELE

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LATE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
Ke'ena Lawelawe 'Ōpio
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 16, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
The Honorable Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Leanne Gillespie, Executive Director

SUBJECT: HB 2427 HD1, RELATING TO UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 @ 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Office of Youth Services (OYS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill entitles unaccompanied homeless youth, including runaway youth, with the rights, as provided by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, to immediate enrollment in school, full participation in school activities, and access to comparable school and educational services provided to other students. Established a student-centered, safety-first protocol for unaccompanied homeless youth enrolling in or attending school.

The Office of Youth Services' primary purpose is to prevent delinquency and reduce recidivism among juveniles through prevention, rehabilitation, and treatment services. OYS serves youth ages 14 through 24 years of age and, among others, provides diversion programs

under Act 201, SLH 214, for youth who have committed status offenses, and Act 297, SLH 2025, Safe Spaces emergency shelters and other residential services to youth through contracts with community-based agencies. This bill, as it relates to the Office of Youth Services, may conflict with both Act 201 and Act 297 and other established laws for reporting runaway youth.

Other than the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF), OYS does not provide direct service to youth. OYS respectfully request removal of all language as it relates to the Office of Youth Services, specifically;

Page 5, line 9 “(1) The office of youth services; and”

Page 6, lines 18-20 “The department, in collaboration with the office of youth services, shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to carry out this subpart.”

If the legislature is moving towards additional pathways for "runaway" youth and expanding OYS' statutory focus to providing law enforcement and services to youth directly, OYS will need to conduct a feasibility study to assess current system responses and laws and develop a plan that outlines statutory changes and resources needed in order for OYS to be able to provide such services. OYS respectfully request two-years and an appropriation of \$300,000 to contract with a consultant to conduct this feasibility study and engage with current stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

HB-2427-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:04:02 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasman Kekai Mattox	50501 Hawaii and General Strike Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are submitting this testimony in support of HB2427, which entitles unaccompanied homeless youth to the right to school access. Our youth are our future. it's already egregious enough we have both adults and children living on the street; access to education is fundamental right for all regardless of their housing access or financial situation. For an unhoused child, school may be one of the few constants that gives them something to hang on to during a difficult time.

Judith F. Clark
48-218 Kamehameha Highway
808-499-9966
Judithforceclark@gmail.com
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

February 12, 2026

To: Representative Lisa Marten, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Human Services and Housing

Testimony in Support of HB 2428 HD 1 Relating to Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

As a community advocate, a homeless youth service provider for 25 years,, and a person with lived experience of youth homelessness, I strongly support HB 2427 HD 1.

Unaccompanied homeless are the most vulnerable and least recognized segment of Hawaii's homeless population. They experience many challenges and barriers in obtaining educational services. The supports and services mandated by the federal McKinney-Vento Act and implemented in Hawaii Schools through the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Office are critically important to enable unaccompanied homeless youth to participate in school.

This bill will ensure that unaccompanied can enroll in school, participate in activities, and obtain transportation, meals, and supplies. This bill provides a safety net for our most vulnerable children and youth.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH

HB-2427-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 5:55:51 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

We have to do more to support homeless youth/students in all types of situations. I am proud to support HB2427 and I urge the committee to **SUPPORT** this proposal!

HB-2427-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:49:51 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting this testimony in support of

HB2427, which entitles unaccompanied homeless youth to the right to school access. Our youth are our future. it's already egregious enough we have both adults and children living on the street; access to education is fundamental right for all regardless of their housing access or financial situation. For an unhoused child, school may be one of the few constants that gives them something to hang on to during a difficult time.

Mahalo,

Jen Lum, 'Ewa Beach

HB-2427-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:05:58 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Redford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rights for houseless students!

HB-2427-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:30:10 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mamiko Carroll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou, this testimony is in SUPPORT of HB2427 HD1. Every child has the right to school access. Please make sure that unaccompanied homeless youth have this right and can exercise it.

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
February 17, 2026 at 9:30am
By
Madalyn Landreth, Student
MSW Student at University of Hawaii at Manoa

HB 2427 – RELATING TO UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee:

My name is Madalyn Landreth and I am presenting testimony in support of HB2427.

This bill will ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth will be able to be fully protected under the McKinney-Veto Homeless Assistance Act which intends to remove barriers to school success, including access, enrollment, and attendance.

Children have a right to be able to access education, stability in this education, and access to opportunities to help them succeed academically and socially. Not only do they have a right to access education, but they have a right to have access to the resources within the walls of a school. Whether experiencing homelessness or specifically being an unaccompanied homeless youth not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian should not determine whether or not that child can remain safely at school to have access to education and stability at school, let alone enroll in school.

Further, when an unaccompanied homeless youth not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian appears and continues to attend school, it is an obligation to the student that it is determined why they are an unaccompanied homeless youth and efforts are made to help resolve the factors contributing.

This bill will ensure that regardless of status of students, ALL students have a right to education and support within the educational system. This vulnerable population needs your support and vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2427.

To: Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 16, 2026

RE: House Bill 2427 HD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH.
Report Title: Department of Education; Office of Youth Services; Unaccompanied
Homeless Youth; Enrollment

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 2427 HD1. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

HB-2427-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:38:22 AM

Testimony for HSH on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee -

I am writing today in support of HB2427. This bill entitles unaccompanied homeless use to the right to school access. Our children are our future and it's already egregious enough that we have both adults and children unhoused. Access to education is a fundamental right for all, regardless of their housing or financial situation. For an unhoused child, school can be one of the few constants that gives them something to hang onto during an unstable time.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona