



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

Date: 03/31/2026

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: EDN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HCR161, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A SWIMMER CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Purpose of Bill: Requesting The Department Of Education To Establish A Swimmer Classification Framework For Public Schools.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) respectfully offers comments to the committee for its consideration on HCR 161.

While the Department recognizes the importance of water safety, and has been partnering with community organizations, the specific underlying reason for establishing this particular swimmer classification framework within the public school system is unclear at this time.

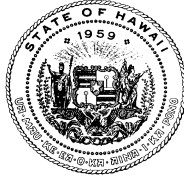
If this resolution is passed, the Department is unsure how the proposed framework would be utilized across schools. Currently, the Department allows schools to select water safety programs most suitable for their specific community, student needs, and within available resources.

The Department already requires water safety education for at least one grade level (K-5) in all elementary schools and provides resources through partners like Nā Kama Kai. It is unclear how this new classification system would integrate with or enhance these existing requirements and curriculum.

The Department remains committed to the safety and well-being of its students and welcomes further dialogue to clarify the intended application and goals of this framework.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HCR161/HR151
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A SWIMMER
CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN H. WOODSON, CHAIR**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at 2:00 PM | Room Number: 415

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Unknown.

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health supports the intent of this resolution to
3 request the development of a swimmer classification framework for public schools.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Emergency Medical Services & Injury Prevention System Branch
5 provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department in support.

6 The Department of Health supports the intent of this resolution. Strengthening water safety
7 awareness, improving skills, and increasing opportunities for swim training are key strategies in
8 preventing drownings and protecting our children. Any step that helps build structure,
9 consistency, and safety around water related activities is a positive step forward for public
10 health.

11 **Offered Amendments:** None

12 Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued commitment
13 to water safety.