



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: HCR176, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING THE STORAGE AND ADMINISTRATION OF ORAL ANTIHISTAMINES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Purpose of Bill: Requesting The Department Of Education To Adopt Policies And Procedures Regarding The Storage And Administration Of Oral Antihistamines In Public Schools.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully opposes HCR 176 due to safety, clinical, and legal concerns related to the administration of oral antihistamines in school settings.

The Department currently maintains comprehensive policies and procedures for the storage and administration of medications. This ensures medications are requested by a parent or legal guardian, prescribed by a qualified health care provider as part of a student's chronic condition treatment plan, and reviewed by a Registered Nurse. These existing frameworks adequately address the needs of students with documented allergies through established emergency care plans and evidence-based protocols.

The Department respectfully challenges a foundational premise of this resolution that oral antihistamines function as emergency medications capable of preventing the escalation of allergic reactions. This assertion contradicts broad medical consensus. Medical guidance consistently identifies epinephrine as the sole first-line treatment for severe allergic reactions and anaphylaxis. Oral antihistamines may be dangerous to administer in allergic reactions with facial or airway swelling, and are not recognized as a treatment or prevention of the life-threatening symptoms of anaphylaxis. Adopting policies premised on this characterization could create a false sense of security and delay appropriate emergency response with epinephrine, placing students at greater risk.

In addition to the clinical concerns, the Department is not authorized under state law to enact the policies this resolution requests. Doing so would require delegating clinical judgment to unlicensed school personnel in ways that conflict with Hawaii's

professional licensure laws, and would ultimately compromise the safety of students and staff.

The Department remains committed to student health and safety and welcomes continued dialogue with the Legislature on approaches that are grounded in medical evidence and consistent with the Department's legal authority.

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

HCR-176

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 3:44:52 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Kihei Lani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to support HR166,HCR176.

I am a parent from Moloka‘i of a child with a life-threatening condition called Wheat-Dependent Exercise-Induced Anaphylaxis. His emergency action plan, written by his allergist, includes an EpiPen followed by oral diphenhydramine, or Benadryl, if he is conscious.

One of the main issues we are facing is confusion within current DOE policies and forms. While Benadryl is available over the counter, in my son’s case it is physician-directed and part of a prescribed emergency protocol. However, the way current forms and procedures are written creates contradictions between “over-the-counter” and “prescription” medication, which leads to uncertainty about whether staff are allowed to administer it.

This lack of clarity matters, especially on Moloka‘i, where we have one hospital and limited ambulance availability. Delays in emergency response are real, and the actions taken in the first few minutes at school are critical.

HR166/HCR176 is important because it asks DOE to clarify policies, align forms with medical reality, and ensure staff are properly trained and supported. This will help prevent hesitation and ensure that students can receive appropriate care when it matters most.

From our own experience, this is not theoretical. My son was served wheat multiple times in one school year (23-24) which he discerned and rejected; however on one occasion he ingested a soup with wheat and I rushed him to the emergency room myself. People are confused at every turn, clarity is necessary. That experience tells us how important it is to have consistent and clearly understood procedures in place.

I strongly support HR166/HCR176 and respectfully ask that you move this forward.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kimberly Lani
Moloka‘i Parent

HCR-176

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 4:00:26 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
EZEKIEL LANI	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Ezekiel, and I'm a ninth grader at Moloka'i High. I'm writing to support HR166/HCR176.

When I was in seventh grade, I was served wheat lunches at school, even though I have a life-threatening allergy. Four times I saw it was wheat like bread and didn't eat it, but one time I didn't know it was in my soup, and I ended up having a reaction right away. My mom had to rush me to the hospital and I was really sick for a while after that. I was too scared to eat at school for over 2 years. I just started eating at school again a few months ago.

My doctor said I need an EpiPen and Benadryl if I have an accident, but the school is confused about when they can give Benadryl because it's over-the-counter. In my case, it's prescribed. It's scary that there's so much confusion when it's about my life.

On Moloka'i, we have only two ambulances, and sometimes they're busy. I can't believe people are arguing about whether I should get life-saving medicine. I just want to stop a reaction, not maybe die from my allergy when no one can come to help me fast enough.

Please make clear policies so everyone knows what to do and can act fast. I want the school people to be prepared, not confused, when it comes to keeping me safe.

Mahalo

Ezekiel Lani

9th Grade, Moloka'i High School