

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

Tuesday, March 24, 2026
3:02 p.m.
State Capitol, 229

SR 27 / SCR31

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO EVALUATE AND RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LICENSING, TRAINING, AND WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS IN THE STATE.

Senate Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) supports SR27 and SCR31. This resolution appropriately requests that the DOT, in coordination with the Department of Education, evaluate and recommend improvements to the licensing, training, and workforce pipeline for school bus drivers in the State of Hawaii.

The resolution addresses critical challenges facing the school transportation system, including persistent shortages of qualified drivers, service disruptions, and inequitable access to education for students in rural and neighbor island communities.

The DOT recognizes the importance of improving access to commercial driver's licensing (CDL), especially in geographically isolated areas where testing availability and scheduling capacity remain significant barriers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.



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

Date: 03/24/2026

Time: 03:02 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: TRS

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SCR31, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO EVALUATE AND RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LICENSING, TRAINING, AND WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS IN THE STATE.

Purpose of Bill: Requesting The Department Of Transportation, In Coordination With The Department Of Education, To Evaluate And Recommend Improvements To The Licensing, Training, And Workforce Pipeline For School Bus Drivers In The State.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) would like to provide comments on SCR31 requesting the Department of Transportation (DOT), in coordination with the Department, to evaluate and recommend improvements to licensing, training, and workforce pipeline for school bus drivers.

While the Department supports the resolution's intent to partner with DOT to streamline licensing procedures and strengthen coordination between the Departments, it is important to acknowledge that the primary challenge is not regulatory complexity but a persistent lack of willing applicants.

Even with an efficient licensing and training system, recruitment will remain difficult due to limited applicants interested in this position. Current school bus contractors already focus their efforts on hiring and retention, such as increased compensation, more predictable schedules, retention incentives, and targeted recruitment strategies. These will likely have a far greater impact on stabilizing the workforce than procedural changes alone.

The Department appreciates the Legislature's attention to this issue and thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide comments on SCR31.

SCR-31

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:44:14 AM

Testimony for TRS on 3/24/2026 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janette Snelling	Testifying for HODOE	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my support for SCR31/SR27, which seeks to address the critical issue of transportation for our schools and families in West Hawai'i.

The current situation is urgent. All nineteen schools in the Honoka'a-Kealakehe-Kohala-Konawaena (HKKK) Complex Area have seen bus routes significantly reduced every year. Even when routes are added back, it does not come near to meeting the need. The compounded loss of bus routes severely impacts student attendance and causes high levels of burden on our families.

The HKKK Complex area spans large geographic boundaries; the daily commute to schools can be in excess of 30 miles for students. Without accessible public transportation in our rural communities, bus transportation is the only option.

Bus driver shortages is a multi-faceted problem. The collaboration among key agencies can better develop flexible solutions for recruitment, training, licensing, and credentialing that transcend geographic location as a barrier.

Coordination between state agencies will be more effective in resolving obstacles.

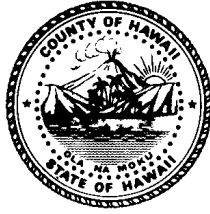
Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

Janette Snelling

Complex Area Superintendent, HKKK

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



William V. Brillhante, Jr.
Managing Director

Merrick Nishimoto
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • Phone (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
Phone (808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

Testimony of
C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

Before the Senate Committee on
Transportation
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 3:02 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 & Senate Resolution No. 27
Requesting the Department of Transportation, in coordination with the Department of Education, to evaluate and recommend improvements to the licensing, training, and workforce pipeline for school bus drivers in the state.

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee,

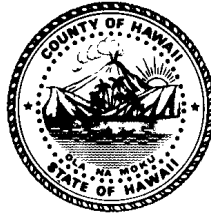
Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 and Senate Resolution No. 27.

As Mayor of the County of Hawai'i, I see firsthand the essential role that reliable school transportation plays in ensuring our keiki have equitable access to education, especially in our island's rural communities. Persistent shortages of qualified school bus drivers have directly impacted students and families, leading to route cancellations, service disruptions, and increased barriers to regular school attendance.

The challenges facing our school bus workforce, including limited access to commercial driver's licensing, a complex credentialing process, and geographic inequities, are particularly acute on the neighbor islands. Addressing these barriers is critical to recruiting and retaining the drivers we need to safely transport our keiki.

I respectfully urge support for this measure to strengthen interagency coordination, improve licensing and training pathways, and expand opportunities for those interested in serving as school bus drivers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 and Senate Resolution No. 27.



HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

March 23, 2026

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

RE: **Support for SCR31/SR27**, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO EVALUATE AND RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LICENSING, TRAINING, AND WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS IN THE STATE

Hearing: **March 24, 2026 at 3:02 pm**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I write in strong support of SCR31 and SR27 requesting the Department of Transportation, in coordination with the Department of Education, to evaluate and recommend improvements to the licensing, training, and workforce pipeline for school bus drivers across the State of Hawai'i.

Reliable school transportation is a fundamental component of ensuring consistent and equitable access to education, particularly for students in rural and neighbor island communities such as North Kona and across Hawai'i Island. In recent years, our communities have experienced firsthand the impacts of ongoing school bus driver shortages, including route cancellations, delayed service, and increased burdens on working families. These disruptions not only affect daily attendance, but also place disproportionate hardship on students with disabilities and those without alternative transportation options.

This measure appropriately recognizes that the challenges facing school transportation are multifaceted. Barriers to entry into the profession—such as limited access to commercial driver's license testing, geographic disparities in training opportunities, and coordination gaps between agencies and private contractors—have made it difficult to build and sustain a reliable workforce. On Hawai'i Island in particular, these barriers are often amplified by distance and limited infrastructure.

By requesting a comprehensive evaluation, this resolution takes an important step toward identifying practical and achievable solutions. Expanding access to licensing through

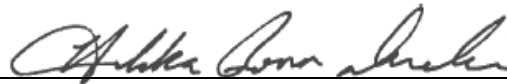
decentralized or mobile testing, strengthening partnerships with community colleges and workforce development programs, and improving interagency coordination are all strategies that could significantly improve recruitment and retention of qualified drivers.

Equally important is the recognition that school bus drivers are employed by private contractors, which adds complexity to workforce development efforts. A coordinated approach that aligns state policy, contractor needs, and workforce pathways will be critical to long-term success.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to adopt this measure and support a thorough, collaborative effort to strengthen Hawai'i's school transportation system. Ensuring that our keiki can safely and reliably get to school each day is not only an operational priority, but a commitment to educational equity and community well-being.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

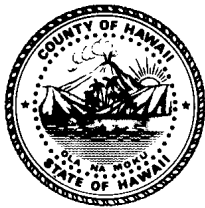
Sincerely,



HOLEKA GORO INABA, Ed.D.,
Council Chair, District 8, North Kona

HGI.wpb

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: March 23, 2026
TO: Senate Committee on Transportation
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: SCR31/SR27

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Committee Members,

I strongly support SCR31/SR27. Hawaii's ongoing school bus driver shortage has created serious and inequitable barriers to students' access to education, particularly for families in rural and neighbor island communities where school bus routes are delayed, reduced, or eliminated altogether. Additionally, traffic concerns are compounded due to a lack of bus options for families, which impacts everyone.

The bus driver shortages disproportionately impact working families, kūpuna caregivers, and students who rely on school bus transportation as their primary means of getting to and from school. System-level obstacles such as limited local access to licensing and training opportunities make it especially difficult for neighbor island residents to enter and remain in the profession. Without coordinated statewide support, these disparities will continue to widen, leaving already underserved communities without reliable and safe student transportation. We need quick action and solutions for this ongoing problem.

Mahalo,

Jenn Kagiwada

DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE KUPA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

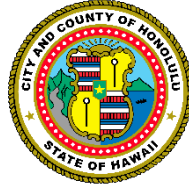
ADMINISTRATION

925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD, SUITE 257 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817
PHONE: (808) 768-3392 • FAX: (808) 768-3750 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA

KIMBERLY M. HASHIRO
DIRECTOR
PO'O

MEGAN JOHNSON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O



March 23, 2026

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation:

SUBJECT: S.C.R. No. 31 - Requesting the Department of Transportation, in Coordination with the Department of Education, to Evaluate and Recommend Improvements to the Licensing, Training, and Workforce Pipeline for School Bus Drivers in the State

S.R. No. 27 - Requesting the Department of Transportation, in Coordination with the Department of Education, to Evaluate and Recommend Improvements to the Licensing, Training, and Workforce Pipeline for School Bus Drivers in the State

HEARING: Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 3:02 p.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD) respectfully offers testimony in **support** of S.C.R. No. 31 and S.R. No. 27 for your committee's consideration. Pursuant to Section 6-402 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu, CSD Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) administers the motor vehicle driver licensing program for the island of O'ahu.

CSD supports these resolutions because they provide a meaningful opportunity to strengthen Hawai'i's workforce while maintaining appropriate licensing standards. For this reason, the Department of Customer Services **supports** S.C.R. No. 31 and S.R. No. 27 and thanks you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

for Kimberly M. Hashiro
Director

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR



Testimony of Derek S.K. Kawakami Mayor, County of Kaua'i

LATE

Before the
Committee on Transportation
March 24, 2026; 3:02 PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SCR 31 / SR 27

Requesting the Department of Transportation, in Coordination with the Department of Education, to Evaluate and Recommend Improvements to the Licensing, Training, and Workforce Pipeline for School Bus Drivers in the State

Honorable Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee:

I write in **strong support** of SCR 31 / SR 27 which requests the Department of Transportation, in coordination with the Department of Education, to evaluate and recommend improvements to the licensing, training, and workforce pipeline for school bus drivers across the State of Hawai'i.

The barriers identified in this resolution including limited geographic availability of CDL testing, scheduling constraints, and inequities faced by neighbor island applicants are consistent with what we observe locally. Expanding access to testing and training, decentralizing licensing infrastructure, and building clearer career pathways would benefit not only the school bus workforce, but potentially the broader public transportation system as well.

In addition to the shortage of school bus drivers, our Kaua'i County Transportation Agency is experiencing a critical shortage of Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to the point of limiting bus service to only six days a week. Not only are our students and families impacted by the shortage of bus drivers, but our residents who also depend on public transit for work, medical appointments, and daily necessities are left without reliable service on weekends, underscoring just how far-reaching the CDL driver shortage truly is.

We strongly urge the Legislature to adopt SCR 31 / SR 27 and call on the relevant departments to engage county governments as meaningful partners in this evaluation. A comprehensive, statewide approach to CDL workforce development will strengthen school transportation, county transit, and the communities we all serve.



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

Mar 24, 2026

MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair / Sec

Valerie Yamada

Vice Chair

Zora Shove

Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

Member

Scott Suzuki
Sheila Castaneda
Jennifer Hartssock

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: SR27 – Requesting the Department of Transportation, in Coordination with the Department of Education, to Evaluate and Recommend Improvements to the Licensing, Training, and Workforce Pipeline for School Bus Drivers in the State

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of SR27**, with comments. Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) is a cross-disability, community-based nonprofit that promotes the Independent Living philosophy so people with disabilities of all ages can live, learn, and participate fully in their communities.

Reliable, accessible school transportation is a civil rights issue for Hawaii's keiki with disabilities. The resolution correctly notes that transportation disruptions disproportionately affect students with disabilities, rural students, and families with limited access to alternatives. Hawaii serves roughly 173,000 public school students, and approximately 11 percent (around 18,000 students) receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, meaning transportation breakdowns can immediately undermine access to a free appropriate public education for a large share of students.

Recent school bus driver shortages have already required extraordinary measures. In 2024, the State estimated a need for more than one hundred additional school bus drivers statewide and warned that over one hundred routes could be reduced or suspended, affecting thousands of students and



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair / Sec

Valerie Yamada

Vice Chair

Zora Shove

Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

Member

Scott Suzuki
Sheila Castaneda
Jennifer Hartssock

families. These gaps are especially harmful for students with disabilities in rural and neighbor island communities, where missing a single bus route can completely sever a student's connection to school and related services.

AILH respectfully supports SR27 and offers three comments to strengthen its impact for disabled students. First, when the resolution directs the Department of Transportation and Department of Education to consult "other relevant stakeholders," we ask that disability organizations, families of students with disabilities, and disabled youth themselves be explicitly included in that stakeholder group. Disabled students are direct riders whose lived experience with safety, consistency, and dignity on school buses must inform any evaluation of licensing, training, and workforce pipelines.

Second, as the evaluation reviews "training" and workforce development, AILH urges that the scope explicitly include robust, cross-disability training for all school bus drivers, not only those assigned to special education routes. This training should cover disability rights and protections, communication and behavioral supports, safe loading, unloading, and securement of mobility devices, and emergency procedures when a student may need more time and assistance to evacuate a bus. Integrating cultural competency and language access grounded in Hawaii's communities will further support safe, respectful transportation for disabled students across the islands.

Third, we ask that the evaluation prioritize neighbor island and rural equity in licensing access, testing availability, and workforce stability. Addressing geographic inequities in commercial driver's license access, exploring mobile or regional testing options, and aligning licensing pathways with school transportation workforce needs on every island are essential so students with disabilities are not left without a way to get to school. Collecting and analyzing data disaggregated by geography will help ensure that solutions truly reach the communities most impacted by route cancellations and persistent vacancies.

Mahalo for your leadership on this issue and for recognizing the disproportionate impact of transportation disruptions on students with



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair / Sec

Valerie Yamada

Vice Chair

Zora Shove

Treasurer

Jonathan Yap

Member

Scott Suzuki
Sheila Castaneda
Jennifer Hartssock

disabilities. AILH respectfully urges the Senate to adopt SR27 and to ensure that disability voices, training needs, and neighbor island realities are centered as the Departments of Transportation and Education conduct this important evaluation.

Mahalo,

Roxanne Bolden

Executive Director

SCR-31

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 5:00:46 PM

Testimony for TRS on 3/24/2026 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Edwards Hunt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SCR31 / SR27

To: The Senate Committee on Transportation (TRS)

Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Time: 3:02 p.m.

From: Tiffany Edwards Hunt, Student Activities Coordinator, Kea'au Middle School

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tiffany Edwards Hunt, and I am the Student Activities Coordinator at Kea'au Middle School. I am writing today to express my strong support for SCR31 and SR27, which request an evaluation and recommendation for improvements to the licensing, training, and workforce pipeline for school bus drivers in our state.

In my role at Kea'au Middle, I see firsthand how vital reliable transportation is to the success and well-being of our students. Our community faces unique socio-economic challenges, and for many of our families, the school bus is not just a convenience—it is a critical lifeline.

Why This Legislation Matters for Our Students:

- **Equity and Access:** Many of our students live in areas where alternative transportation is not an option. When bus routes are cancelled or inconsistent due to driver shortages, these students lose their access to education and extracurricular activities.
- **Safety and Stability:** A robust workforce pipeline ensures that we aren't just filling seats, but providing well-trained, reliable professionals who prioritize the safety of our keiki.
- **Operational Necessity:** The current strain on the driver workforce has led to route consolidations that leave students waiting for long periods or missing school entirely. For a student to thrive, they must first be able to get to the classroom.

The socio-economics of our district require a school system that removes barriers to attendance rather than creating them. By streamlining the licensing process and strengthening the workforce pipeline, this legislation addresses the root cause of our transportation instability.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass SCR31 and SR27 to ensure that every student at Kea'au Middle and across the state has a reliable way to get to school and participate in the activities that help them grow.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Tiffany E Hunt

Kea'au

SCR-31

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 10:16:28 AM

Testimony for TRS on 3/24/2026 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

WILL IT IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE???

27 SR REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO EVALUATE AND RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LICENSING, TRAINING, AND WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS IN THE STATE.