

Corey Rosenlee
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Osa Tui Jr.
Vice President
Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LOWER & HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HB 1295 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports HB 1295**, relating to education. This measure would establish and appropriate funds for a state school meal subsidy program within the department of education to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program.

In Hawai'i, food insecurity is one of the most pressing manifestations of overall socioeconomic inequality. Over 70,000 public school students eat free or reduced price meals in our state, though only 40 percent eat school breakfast. Hawai'i ranks 47th in school breakfast participation rates among qualifying students.

Congress established the National School Lunch Program, in 1946, and School Breakfast Program, fully implemented in 1975, to ensure that low-income students are properly nourished. Yet, many local families struggle to provide nutritious meals for their children. According the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, in Hawai'i, 15.3 percent of families experience food insecurity, meaning that "they do not always know how they will afford their next meal." An additional 3.9 percent are "very low food secure" families that have significantly reduced food consumption because of economic hardship. At the same time, 47 percent of all public school students qualify for the Department of Education's free and reduced lunch program, a number that has risen by 20 percent since 2007 because of economic decline and cost of living increases. Low-income students are, again, less likely to receive adequate meals at home, leaving them without the calories necessary to perform basic academic tasks. Cases of chronic hunger can lead to achievement gaps, concentration loss, illness, increased absenteeism,



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behavioral problems, depression, and misdiagnosed learning disabilities. Thus, providing a decent meal for our impoverished children is a moral and educational imperative.

Even with these programs in place there are some students in Hawaii's public schools that do not meet the Federal criteria and therefore excluded. A hungry student is a student that cannot learn at their full potential. HB 1295 will help ensure that all of Hawaii's public school children receive nutritious meals.

To ensure that ALL of our students are well-fed and ready to learn, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** HB 1295.

HB-1295

Submitted on: 2/13/2019 11:34:12 AM

Testimony for LHE on 2/14/2019 2:35:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

LATE

Date: 02/14/2019

Time: 02:35 PM

Location: 309

Committee: House Lower & Higher
Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1295 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes and appropriates funds for a state school meal subsidy program within the department of education to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB 1295 and respectfully offers comments.

While the Department is in support of the development and implementation of a school meal subsidy program for students attending Department schools, HB 1295, as written, targets only the children of families who are not eligible for free or reduced priced meals.

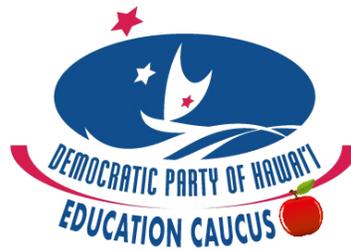
HB 1295 does not address the needs of children of families who qualify for reduced priced meals by missing the eligibility for free meals by a few dollars. There are currently over 98,000 paid students and over 15,000 students who receive meals at a reduced cost.

The Department suggests, if the Legislature is amenable, that this bill be amended to include all students that pay for their meals. This will guarantee that all students are able to consume meals without incurring any negative balances for their meals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1295.

The Hawaii State Department of Education seeks to advance the goals of the Strategic Plan which is focused on student success, staff success, and successful systems of support. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.

LATE



HOUSE BILL 1295, RELATING TO EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 14, 2019 · HOUSE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. JUSTIN WOODSON

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports HB 1295, relating to education, which establishes and appropriates funds for a state school meal subsidy program within the department of education to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program.

Currently, 48.88 percent of students enrolled in the Hawai'i Department of Education are considered economically disadvantaged. Moreover, 184 schools are classified as Title I, meaning at least 47.2 percent of the school's total student population is impoverished.

While 87,576 students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, many students remain on the cusp of poverty and attend schools that do not meet the minimum poverty requirements to qualify the entire school for reduced-price lunch. In turn, these students may be unavailable to afford the basic nutrition needed to actively participate in the learning process.

Hawai'i has the highest cost of living in the nation. To boost student achievement, we should ensure that our keiki are hungry for knowledge by ensuring that they're never hungry for food.