



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

Date: 03/18/2019
Time: 02:00 PM
Location: 309
Committee: House Lower & Higher
Education

Department: Education

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

Title of Resolution: HCR 223 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO OFFER VEGETARIAN MEAL OPTIONS IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT LEAST ONCE WEEKLY.

Purpose of Resolution

:

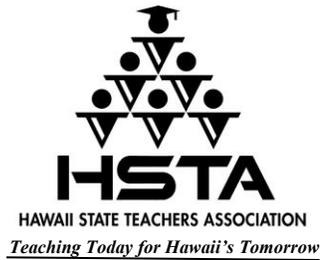
Department's Position:

The Department of Education (DOE) agrees with the intent of HCR 223 as the DOE has already begun the process of incorporating more vegetarian meals into the menu cycle. The Department also has designed its current lunch menus to be sixty (60) percent scratch cooking with no more than forty (40) percent processed foods. Additionally, the DOE offers soy milk to students providing a non-dairy, plant based option.

The Department participates in and offers the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). The FFVP introduces children in elementary school to a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. The program currently offers close to fifty (50) different fruits and vegetables. This introduction of fresh fruits and vegetables to children helps to increase the overall acceptance and consumption of fresh, unprocessed produce.

The Department agrees with HCR 223 and has taken steps to increase the number of fruits, vegetables, and vegetarian options to its students.

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.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LOWER & HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HCR 223/HR 198 - URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO OFFER
VEGETARIAN MEAL OPTIONS IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT LEAST ONCE WEEKLY.

MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports HCR 223/HR 198, with suggested amendment**, urging the Department of Education to offer vegetarian meal options in all public schools at least once weekly.

The Hawaii State Teachers Association recognizes that healthy eating habits have a direct correlation to thriving as a student. Vegetarian diets have been shown to help reduce the chances of developing diabetes. They also can lower cholesterol levels and decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Hawai'i has seen an increase in its obesity rate every year, but one, over the last two decades according to the [2017 The State of Obesity report](#). This request can help change this trend as well as set students up for better eating habits later in life.

HSTA has the following suggested amendment to page 1, line 19:
“chances of developing diabetes, as well as lower cholesterol levels, and decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, among other benefits”

The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks that your committee to **support** HCR 223/HR 198.

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/16/2019 5:20:29 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alexandra Kahn	Take Flight Digital Ltd.	Support	Yes

Comments:

For too many years we have known the negative environmental impact of the cattle industry, it's similar to the amount of time we have been able to link the consumption of red meat to heart conditions, obesity, and cancers. Movies have been made, books have been written, scientific research on the negative environmental and health impacts have been published and spread. And yet, nothing has changed. Why is this? The same reason things like the original killing of the electric car, the killing of pesticide prevention bills, the reason why eating processed foods in larger quantities is more affordable than local organic food— big corporations with big money. However, we are at a time in history when other countries and communities are stepping up and taking a stance, regardless of what the big corporations want. And the reality is, there is an overall positive economic impact of making these changes towards an economy that's fueled by plants and renewable resources.

Countries throughout Europe proved years ago what switching to renewable resources for energy production could do to decrease costs and environmental impact, and Hawaii caught on and made that same commitment in 2018. And yet, the world's love for and dependency on meat is not changing at the rate it should, especially knowing the massive impact the cattle industry has on the world- water and land use to raise the cattle, utilizing grain to feed the cattle rather than the people, increasing the cost of grain, a leading cause of deforestation which releases previously sequestered carbon dioxide, overuse of antibiotics and hormones to increase the growth rate and size of cows, increase in obesity, heart disease and cancer, etc. Additionally, roughly 18% of all greenhouse gas emissions are from the cattle industry. To put into perspective, transportation is responsible for 13%. It's VERY evident that red meat has a negative impact, but it's also tied to the history and cultures of so many places around the world, including Hawaii, that it will always be a part of our diet. There is no feasible way to change this, but there IS a way to decrease the amount consumed, and therefore produced, and force a little more moderation in society. A staggering statistics to put into consideration- 425 gallons of water is required to produce 1/4 of a beef burger- there are millions of people suffering from dehydration due to a lack of clean drinking water every day. Unfortunately clean drinking water is not an unlimited resource and while renewable to an extent, requires ample time to replenish. Some cities are already

“out of” drinking water, such as Cape Town, South Africa and have turned to desalinization.

Starting positive behavior in school is key to developing informed and conscious adults. It's hard to learn new behaviors as an adult, but not so much as a child because they have not formed opinions or often times preferences. Introducing vegetarian food into schools, but in a way that incorporates VEGETABLES, not just bowls of pasta without meat, will not only help children to get more nutrition in their diets, but it will also make vegetables a regular part of their lives. Vegetarian food can be inspiring and delicious, when cooked by someone knowledgeable, and it's important for children to learn to enjoy vegetables rather than look at them like the enemy. This is the case for nutritious food in general, and for all ages, but it's the easiest change to make in children. Chances are, if you can get the children to like vegetables and understand the positive impact they are making on the planet by decreasing their personal consumption of meat, they will leave school and bring that knowledge and preference into their homes and spread among their families. According to National Geographic, “if an entire family skipped meat and cheese one day per week, it's the equivalent of not driving for five weeks.”

As of late, Hawaii is becoming a state to look to in terms of passing more aggressive legislature in favor of the environment, but also at times in favor of the economy. As the first state to commit to 100% renewable energy and net zero public schools, passing HRC223 is just another component in the path towards a more sustainable, prosperous, and joyous future for our children. The jargon of the bill in question is not even stating that this will be a requirement, simply an urging on part of the DOE. It's an easy step that if taken will provide so much good and is a significant step in the right direction to make our state a model for all others to follow.

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 4:07:27 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

This is a wonderful opportunity to try to make our keikis' meals healthier and offer the option to learn about eating a wide variety of different proteins. Please vote yea for HCR223 !



To: The House Committee on Lower & Higher Education
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Monday, 3/18/19

In support of HCR223

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee members,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org supports **HCR223**.

Reduction in meat consumption can be beneficial not only to the environment but to the health of Hawaii's students. A vegetarian diet has been shown to reduce the chances of developing diabetes, lower cholesterol, and decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, among other benefits. Offering vegetarian options can promote a healthy lifestyle for our youth, in addition to helping combat global warming as a result of reduced greenhouse gases associated with more plant-based eating. Hundreds of schools across the United States, including Kamehameha Schools Maui, have already made the decision to support the health of students and to promote environmentally conscious eating and have adopted a Meatless Monday lunch program. It is time to afford this benefit option to all our students now!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 10:05:42 AM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joseph Kohn MD	We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	No

Comments:

Reduction in meat consumption can be beneficial not only to the environment but to the health of Hawaii's students. A vegetarian diet has been shown to reduce the chances of developing diabetes, lower cholesterol, and decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, among other benefits. Offering vegetarian options can promote a healthy lifestyle for our youth, in addition to helping combat global warming as a result of reduced greenhouse gases associated with more plant-based eating. Hundreds of schools across the United States, including Kamehameha Schools Maui, have already made the decision to support the health of students and to promote environmentally conscious eating and have adopted a Meatless Monday lunch program. It is time to afford this benefit option to all our students now!

www.WeAreOne.cc

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 1:08:46 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alexandra Kahn	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Testifier's name with position/title and organization: Alexandra Kahn, Media Producer at Take Flight Digital and Non-Profit Director at Take Flight Digital, Ltd.

The Committee(s) to which the comments are directed: LHE

The date and time of the hearing: March 18, 2019 2pm

Measure number: HCR223

We already know that the cattle industry has a negative impact on the environment.

Scientists have been able to link the excessive consumption of red meat to an increase in heart disease, obesity, and cancers. Movies have been made, books have been written, scientific research on the negative environmental and health impacts have been published and disseminated.

And yet, we are consuming more meat per capita now than we were 20 years ago. Why is this? It is the same reason why the original electric car was killed, why the pesticide prevention bill was halted, why eating processed foods in larger quantities is more affordable than local organic food— big corporations with big money.

However, we are at a time in history when other countries and communities are stepping up and taking a stance, regardless of what the big corporations want. The reality is, there is an overall positive economic impact of changing in favor of a world fueled by plants and renewable resources.

Countries throughout Europe proved years ago what switching to renewable resources for energy production could do to decrease costs and environmental impact, and Hawaii caught on and made that same commitment in 2018. And yet, the world's love for and dependency on meat is *increasing*- 30% of the world's ice-free surface is currently used to raise the animals we eat, a leading cause of deforestation which releases previously sequestered carbon dioxide comes from making space for the meat industry, there is overuse of antibiotics and growth hormones, there continues to be an increase in

obesity, heart disease and cancer, the list goes on and on. Additionally, a significant source of all greenhouse gas emissions are from the meat industry as a whole.

In spite of knowing the negative impacts of meat production and consumption, meat is tied to the history and cultures of so many places around the world, including Hawaii and it will always be a part of our diet. There is no feasible way to change this, but there IS a way to decrease the amount consumed, and therefore produced, and force a little more moderation in society.

Starting positive behavior in school is key to developing informed and conscious adults. It's hard to learn new behaviors as an adult, while children do not have ingrained opinions and are in the process of developing specific preferences. Introducing vegetarian food into schools, but in a way that incorporates VEGETABLES, not just bowls of pasta without meat which IS considered vegetarian, will not only help children to get more nutrition in their diets, but it will also make vegetables a regular part of their lives. It's important for children to learn to enjoy vegetables for their taste and nutrition, rather than look at them like the enemy. According to National Geographic, "if an entire family skipped meat and cheese one day per week, it's the equivalent of not driving for five weeks." Chances are, if you can get the children to like vegetables and understand the positive impact they are making on the planet by decreasing their personal consumption of meat, they will leave school and bring that knowledge and preference into their homes and spread it among their families.

Hawaii is becoming a state others look to in terms of passing more aggressive legislature in favor of the environment. As the first state to commit to 100% renewable energy and net zero public schools, passing HRC223 is just another component in the path towards a more sustainable, prosperous, and joyous future for our children. The jargon of the bill in question is not even stating that this will be a requirement, simply an urging on part of the DOE. It's an easy change that if made will provide so much good and is a significant step in the right direction to make our state a model for all others to follow.

Thank you.

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/16/2019 11:53:32 AM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Johanna Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I urge the department of education to offer veg options at public schools. I believe it is the responsibility of educators, leaders, and legislatures to provide balanced, nutritional foods to our children. It is our responsibility to nourish them and educate them and provide healthier food options.

Providing vegetarian options is more inclusive as it accomodates to children with varying diets and lifestyles. The scientific and nutritional evidence is clear that a vegetarian diet is more sustainable and healthier for our planet and for the people.

Having vegetarian options in public schools will be a progressive step towards a more responsible government that protects the environment and overall, the health of the people.

Thank you! Please pass this bill

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/16/2019 12:53:35 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Yoshio Akaha	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honourable Representatives,

Thank you for sitting with this idea and giving it your thorough attention. I learned of this bill today and was immediately moved to stand behind those children with inadequate school lunch options. Eating more healthy food should be supported. Eating in accordance with one's conscience or one's beliefs should be supported. I have learned that beyond the many known health benefits of eating an adequate amount of vegetables, grains, fruits, nuts, etc., it also costs less than eating meat when you consider all of the resources that are spent on raising livestock. Plants have a carbon negative impact on our environment whereas animals do not; having an excessive number has a negative impact. So, why not support students by expanding their food options. That way, at least once a week, they will be able to have access to more vegetables, fruits, etc., if that's what they want to eat. It might be a little more work in the short term to set up new contracts with food vendors, but it seems to me to be a win-win-win in terms of finances, global impact, and the students' freedom to choose healthy food.

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/16/2019 3:54:22 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brian Okumura	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I believe offering vegetarian options for children is a great way to educate them on the environmental impacts of the meat industry. Also, it can serve as a way to inform children of different dietary options that don't include meat. Opening the eyes of our youth to the over consumptions of meat can help preserve our future as individuals and as a society.

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/16/2019 8:13:37 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
matthew Forney	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support this bill. How is it possible that this isn't already implemented by the Hawaii school systems? With the nutritional information available to parents and children alike, more and more people are turning to none meat based diets. Am I missing something? Did vegetables suddenly become more expensive than their meat based product counter parts. How much money would the school system save every year by changing just one meal a week? Why are we just urging schools to do this? Is there a reason this can't be a requirement?

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 8:15:52 AM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marissa Miller	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Marissa and I am 19 years old. I am writing in support of this bill because I personally felt that there could have been more vegetarian options at my school growing up. It is extremely important that students have access to vegetarian or vegan meal options, whether for religious beliefs, sustainability commitments, or health concerns. Vegetarian meal options are often cheaper (and therefore more affordable for low-income families) and are also healthier and more environmentally friendly (since animal agriculture is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions). Please consider the health of our keiki and our 'Ä• ina in your decision on this bill.

Mahalo.

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 8:24:14 AM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ava Wagner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a progressive, climate-conscious state, I urge Hawaii State Legislator to consider this bill that will empower students to make their own decision of what they consume and be more aware of how their decisions impact the world. I would have greatly appreciated this when I was in the Hawaii Public School system. The meal options are extremely limited and do not reflect healthy options for one's body or the environment. Hawaii school lunches are also not reflective of the local diet. Hawaii should work with local farmers to locally source their ingredients in order to step toward sustainability.

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 11:03:48 AM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Anna	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is an important bill to pass considering the rising trend of vegetarianism in families and young people due to an increased awareness of the benefits of plant-based diets for the environment and our health. The great thing about offering a vegetarian option is that everybody, not only vegetarians, can eat it, fostering inclusive. As someone who has worked with children and teens both in and out of the school system, this is a step into the right direction to normalize being veg-friendly in our culture

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 1:47:07 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
justin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is a great step in the right direction for the health of children in the state of Hawaii. There is nothing being mandated by the government, simply providing choices so that individuals can make decisions based on their personal desire to live a more healthful life.

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 4:04:26 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
brianna arnolde	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of HCR223 and believe that at a bare minimum, vegetarian/vegan lunch options for public school students should be made available at least once a week, if not more often. Our community should be able to find healthy and satisfying options to suit their dietary restrictions no matter where they are, but as students spend majority of their time on school property, this seems like an obvious necessary step, specially as we begin to learn more about the consumption of animal protein and how it affects our environment .

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 6:54:41 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gillian Boss	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Much more of a healthy option , consider vegan as well.

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 7:03:15 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ryuko Miura	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 8:54:20 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Nandoskar	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support HCR223! We raised our daughter vegetarian from birth (she's now 32) to inspire compassion for the animals who are terribly mistreated, for the Earth which suffers greatly from deforestation to make way for grazing land for beef cattle and pollution from factory farm runoff and for human health which is severely compromised by the saturated fats rampant in animal food products. There are so many families now moving toward a plant based diet that our schools should provide daily options. HCR 223 is a step in the right direction. Mahalo for your consideration.

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 8:59:51 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 9:43:42 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joy Silver	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/17/2019 11:05:03 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jaunette Itsuno	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

There would be many benefits to providing more vegetarian options. There are many reasons that this would be an advantage to the public school system such as that vegetarian food can be less expensive and healthier. Many students also require vegetarian options because of ethical and religious beliefs. Also, a major factor is the environmental effects from meat production such as pollution, climate change, and use of water and other resources. Given these reasons, it would actually make more sense to offer a complete and balanced vegetarian meal every day of the school week.

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 1:39:53 AM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David M Johnston	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support vegetarian meals in the schools. I went vegetarian when I was 13 while attending a charter school on the mainland. Then when I returned to Maui (I was born and raised in Maui til age 10) at 16 to attend a public school I had to bring my own meals to feel satisfied. I wish there was a complete vegetarian meal option then. So now I'm happy this bill will do just that, so pass it with the animals, people, and planet in mind.

Thank you,

David Johnston

LATE

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 7:10:10 AM
Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please support HCR223. A main reason US children don't have healthier eating patterns is the lack of exposure to alternatives.

Thank you for your time.

Andrea Quinn

Kihei

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 12:11:56 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Janet Graham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Reduction in meat consumption can be beneficial not only to the environment but to the health of Hawaii's students. A vegetarian diet has been shown to reduce the chances of developing diabetes, lower cholesterol, and decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, among other benefits. Offering vegetarian options can promote a healthy lifestyle for our youth, in addition to helping combat global warming as a result of reduced greenhouse gases associated with more plant-based eating. Hundreds of schools across the United States, including Kamehameha Schools Maui, have already made the decision to support the health of students and to promote environmentally conscious eating and have adopted a Meatless Monday lunch program. It is time to afford this benefit option to all our students now!

HCR-223

Submitted on: 3/18/2019 1:50:34 PM

Testimony for LHE on 3/18/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Doorae Shin	Good Food Movement	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Doorae Shin, Co-Founder of the Good Food Movement here in Hawaii testifying in strong support of HCR223. Having worked with school groups in both public & private schools, there is a clear shift for schools and students to begin prioritizing healthy choices along with choices that help address the pressing and urgent environmental issues of today.

Passing this resolution will signal to the DOE and to our schools that the State prioritizes solutions to both health and environmental issues. The concept of meatless Monday is a huge movement around the world and has proven to have a significant positive impact on peoples' lives and on our natural environment.

Environment

We know from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, that 44% of greenhouse gas emissions come from animal agriculture. Additionally, nearly 1/3 of Earth's fresh water is used for animal agriculture, 1/3 of Earth's arable land is used to grow food for animals, and 26% of Earth's ice-free land is used for grazing. With numbers like that, animal agriculture is perhaps the most harmful type of human activity the environment suffers from. Raising livestock and growing the food these animals require, wreak havoc on our environment.

If nearly half of all global greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are from animal agriculture alone, you would think this would be a bigger part of our conversation to address climate change. Especially given that animal agriculture primarily contributes to emissions in the form of methane, which is roughly 30 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a heat-trapping gas.

From an agricultural perspective, producing meat is extremely inefficient and challenging because of the sheer amount of food and water animals require to survive.

This is what leads to the shocking numbers of land and water use associated with producing meat, dairy and other animal products.

Overpopulation

Overpopulation continues to be a stress on our planet, but the crisis is not in human overpopulation per se, but in the overpopulation of the animals we raise for food. We kill an estimated 70 billion land animals per year just to produce food products. Compare that to the 7 billion humans who live on this planet, and you see why this matters. It's tough to wrap your head around how much food, water and land that goes into raising and slaughtering 70 billion animals per year.

And the issues that come solely from the wastewater management – or lack thereof – in these operations, are clear. Runoff from farms with livestock pollutes our streams, rivers, and ocean with an added dose of antibiotics, hormones and pesticides. You can look at the recently failed Big Island Dairy, that was turned into a factory farm, sued for illegal dumping and pollution of cow waste into the local streams, received massive fines, and subsequently shut down as a result.

Water

When I found out that one burger requires over 600 gallons of water to produce, that one gallon of milk requires 1,000 gallons of water to produce, and that plant-based foods require only fractions of the water that animal foods require, it was a big shock. Because I was told to take shorter showers and fix leaky faucets, and no environmental documentary or activist had ever told me that eating less meat and animal products would actually be a way more effective use of my time and energy to try to save our precious planet. With 1/3 of our planet's freshwater used for animal agriculture, it is simply disingenuous to tell people to take shorter showers without telling them to eat less meat and dairy.

What about Grass-fed

With the movement towards conscious meat-eating growing with popularity with the growing movement towards plant-based eating, it is imperative we talk about grass-fed beef and other forms of meat marketed as sustainable. Meat from grass-fed animals, though it is likely healthier than the GMO-fed, antibiotic-filled meat from factory farms, still does not prove its supposed sustainability when you look at the greenhouse gas

emissions and land use. Sure, you win some points by not having to grow and ship mono cropped animal feed, but you don't really get anywhere when you recognize the methane and greenhouse gases continuing to contribute harmful emissions into our atmosphere. And the sustainability claims devolve when you look clearly at the land use impact of grass-fed beef.

Solutions

As humanity finds itself at this planetary crossroads with the impacts of climate change happening already, we must make a choice. Do we remain in our comfort zone, or only making incremental steps to change, or do we decide to be bold and honest about the urgent shifts we must make in our habits, our lifestyle, and our economy to save our planet?

It is our responsibility to our home, this planet and this place, and to our fellow human beings and future generations, to begin making the changes needed to preserve our planet and promote health. This is why HCR223 is such an important and positive solution to the issues outlined above, and I commend you for considering this resolution and I urge you to pass it and help our public schools lead by examples and offer our students healthy, ethical and environmental choices for their school meals.

Mahalo,

Doora Shin



Vegetarian Society of Hawaii

P.O. Box 23208 • Honolulu, HI 96823-3208 • 808-944-VEGI (8344) • info@vsh.org

March 17, 2019

To: The Committee on Lower and Higher Education
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair
And Committee Members,

I am testifying today in support of HCR 223, which seeks to have the Department of Education offer vegetarian meal options in all public schools at least once weekly; and also introduce a "Meatless Monday" program to inform students about the health and environmental benefits of a vegetarian diet. I am currently serving as president of the Vegetarian Society of Hawaii, one of the largest vegetarian societies in the country, which has an educational mission, to promote human health, animal rights and protection of the environment by means of vegetarian, whole food, plant-based vegan education.

Why is this resolution important?

Many of the older generation here in Hawaii remember that when they were children, nearly all of them and their classmates were active and slim, and it was rare to be or to see a child among them that was not. Today, it is a heartbreakingly commonplace thing to see so many of our young people suffering from obesity and the beginnings of lifetime problems with diabetes and heart disease. They did not come to this sorry state on their own.

Too many of the adults in their lives, both at home and in the community, are also suffering from the debilitating consequences of these same problems. It is a health epidemic that is growing in this country and in Hawaii, taking away from the quality of life that our people should be enjoying, and becoming an economic burden both in the private and the governmental sector, as an ever greater proportion of our population needs expensive medical care, and medical insurance costs eat away at the paychecks of even the healthier among us. It takes away from the prosperity of our people, their productivity, and even their happiness, as sick people are often depressed people, as well.

Astonishingly, as huge as our healthcare crisis is, it doesn't have to stay this way. We can make an enormous difference for the better by making simple and inexpensive changes which do not require cutting edge medical technology or



Vegetarian Society of Hawaii

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heroically huge healthcare systems. It is widely acknowledged that that our large, sick population was created by lifestyle choices, especially in our choice of diet. We can, however, thankfully, break out of this ever-growing vicious cycle by giving our children better and healthier food choices, both at home and at school, starting them on a lifetime of better health. This resolution seeks to make a small, but important, start in that direction.

This resolution also has a further beneficial educational component in its “Meatless Monday” program to inform students about the health and environmental benefits of a vegetarian diet. If young people could learn the impact on their own health and also on the health of the environment that their food choices make, they will be better informed to help them live healthier, happier lives, as well as to understand how a plant-based diet can help them to create a significantly smaller carbon footprint on the planet and to reduce the well-documented negative effects on the environment from large-scale animal agriculture.

It is my hope that the Department of Education’s food service managers will embrace this once-a-week challenge to utilize their expertise in designing completely plant-based vegetarian lunch entrees that are nutritionally sound and delicious, as well as free from the cholesterol that is present in pretty much all of the other entrees currently offered. Since this requires a completely plant-based vegetarian entrée menu choice for students just once a week, it will only partially satisfy those who follow a strictly vegetarian/vegan diet. At the same time, though, providing a completely plant-based vegetarian entrée just once a week is a doable-sized change for our school food services. Each of these weekly vegetarian meals has the potential to give not only a healthy break from the usual daily exposure to cholesterol-laden foods for our children, but also to get them started on a lifetime habit of enjoying healthful and tasty meals that do not rely on the presence of artery-clogging cholesterol.

I strongly urge that you support and vote to pass this resolution, and help to create a brighter health future for our young people. Thank you for considering this!

Aloha,

Lorraine Sakaguchi
President
Vegetarian Society of Hawaii