

MAR 08 2018

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS TO  
BE EDUCATED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF HEAVY  
BACKPACKS AND TO TAKE PROACTIVE MEASURES TO AVOID INJURY.

1           WHEREAS, overloaded school backpacks are increasingly  
2 causing back pain and spinal strain to students across the  
3 nation; and  
4

5           WHEREAS, because spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully  
6 developed until after the age of sixteen, overweight backpacks  
7 are a source of repeated low-level stress that may result in  
8 chronic neck, shoulder, or back pain in children; and  
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10           WHEREAS, according to the United States Consumer Product  
11 Safety Commission, more than seven thousand emergency room  
12 visits each year are due to backpack-related injuries; and  
13

14           WHEREAS, studies show that heavy loads carried on the back  
15 have the potential to damage the soft tissues of the shoulder,  
16 causing microstructural damage to the nerves and damage to  
17 internal organs; and  
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19           WHEREAS, studies show an increase in curvatures of the  
20 spine and compressed intervertebral height when backpacks exceed  
21 ten percent of a child's body weight; and  
22

23           WHEREAS, the 2010 Global Burden of Disease Study shows back  
24 pain and musculoskeletal disorders as the leading causes of  
25 disability worldwide; and  
26

27           WHEREAS, children's textbooks are much heavier now than  
28 they were in the past, and students also often carry computers,  
29 cell phones, water bottles, athletic shoes, band instruments,  
30 and other equipment considered essential to have readily  
31 available; and  
32



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1           WHEREAS, studies show that more than ninety percent of  
2 students carry backpacks that weigh as much as twenty-five  
3 percent of the child's body weight; and  
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5           WHEREAS, backpacks often are not worn correctly but are  
6 frequently slung over one shoulder or allowed to hang  
7 significantly below the waistline, increasing the weight on the  
8 shoulders and making the child lean forward when walking or  
9 stoop forward when standing to compensate for the weight; now,  
10 therefore,  
11

12           BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth  
13 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018,  
14 that all school administrators, teachers, parents, and students  
15 are strongly urged to be educated about the potential health  
16 impacts of heavy backpacks and to take proactive measures to  
17 avoid injury; and  
18

19           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education is urged  
20 to develop policies and procedures to allow licensed  
21 chiropractors to conduct interval scoliosis examinations on  
22 children in schools; and  
23

24           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that schools are urged to work with  
25 their parent-teacher associations to assess the extent to which  
26 students use overweight backpacks and to promote innovative  
27 strategies to lessen the need to take all school materials and  
28 books back and forth each day; and  
29

30           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that schools are urged to consider  
31 the following when developing their backpack education talking  
32 points:  
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- 34           (1) Encourage children to use backpacks that weigh no more  
35 than a maximum of ten percent of the child's body  
36 weight;  
37
- 38           (2) Encourage the use of ergonomic backpacks with  
39 individualized compartments to efficiently hold books  
40 and equipment;  
41



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- 1 (3) Encourage children to wear both shoulder straps and
- 2 not sling their backpacks over one shoulder;
- 3
- 4 (4) Encourage the use of backpacks with wide, padded
- 5 adjustable straps that fit a child's body;
- 6
- 7 (5) Encourage leaving the heaviest books at school and
- 8 using handouts or workbooks for homework assignments;
- 9
- 10 (6) Consider increased use of electronic textbooks as
- 11 federal and state funding becomes available; and
- 12
- 13 (7) Consider integrated in-class education about backpack
- 14 weight, for example, by using a hanging scale in the
- 15 classroom to enable students to weigh backpacks and
- 16 track the related data to determine ways to lighten
- 17 loads; and
- 18

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
 20 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
 21 Education, the Superintendent of Education, the Director of the  
 22 Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, and the Executive  
 23 Director of the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission.  
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25 *Michelle N. Ardeni*  
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OFFERED BY:

*D. J. D. J.*  
*Anna Mercedes K.*  
*[Signature]* *[Signature]*

*[Signature]*  
*Clarence Nishiken*  
*Randy de Bok*

*transmitted*  
*[Signature]*

*Kal Nhoak*

*[Signature]*  
*[Signature]*