WHEREAS, the National Institute of Mental Health describes autism spectrum disorder as a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior, and is said to be a "developmental disorder" because symptoms generally appear in the first two years of life; and

WHEREAS, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), a guide created by the American Psychiatric Association used to diagnose mental disorders, people with autism spectrum disorder have difficulty with communication and interaction with other people; restricted interests and repetitive behaviors; and symptoms that hurt the person's ability to function properly in school, work, and other areas of life; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Center for Disease Control determined that approximately one in fifty-nine children is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder; and

WHEREAS, according to Easterseals, in 2014-2015, one thousand six hundred children with disabilities between the ages of three and eighteen who received special education services in Hawaii have autism spectrum disorder; and

WHEREAS, a sensory room is a therapeutic space with a variety of equipment that provides students with special needs with personalized sensory input and helps the students calm and focus themselves so they can be better prepared for learning and interacting with others; and
WHEREAS, a program evaluation conducted by occupational therapists in Muskegon County Northern Service Unit and students at Grand Valley State University Masters of Occupational Science and Therapy on the impact of sensory room activities on student readiness in Muskegon County found that fifty-six percent of students were more engaged in classroom activities post-sensory room intervention; and

WHEREAS, installing sensory rooms in Hawaii schools will help children learn to self-regulate their behaviors and improve their focus, allowing them to achieve success in the classroom; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Education is requested to implement sensory rooms for children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in all schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education implement sensory rooms as follows and in the following order:

(1) In those elementary schools on the neighbor islands that do not have special education classes;

(2) In all other elementary schools in the State;

(3) In those middle and intermediate schools on the neighbor islands that do not have special education classes;

(4) In all other middle and intermediate schools in the State;

(5) In those high schools on the neighbor islands that do not have special education classes; and

(6) In all other high schools in the State; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Education.

OFFERED BY:

[Signatures]

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