
SENATE RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING THE GOVERNOR TO MAINTAIN TEACHERS AND SCHOOL-LEVEL PERSONNEL AS ESSENTIAL WORKERS DURING A PANDEMIC WHEN CONTEMPLATING EMERGENCY FURLOUGHS AND LAYOFFS.

1 WHEREAS, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic
2 continues to have a devastating impact on the State's education
3 system, forcing teachers, school-level personnel, and students
4 to adjust to remote online learning, and blended classes, and
5 causing significant learning losses and other hardships; and
6

7 WHEREAS, in December 2020, the Department of Education
8 announced the details of furlough plans for its 21,900 full-
9 time, salaried employees, and under the proposed furlough plan,
10 teachers would have been required to take six furlough days
11 between January 1, 2021, and June 30, 2021; and
12

13 WHEREAS, on January 21, 2021, the Governor announced that
14 with additional federal funds and more optimistic revenue
15 projections, the public school/education budget cut was reduced
16 from ten percent to 2.5 percent; and
17

18 WHEREAS, even with the reduction in budget cuts, the
19 Department of Education still faces roughly \$140,000,000 in
20 budget cuts for the 2021 school year, with close to seven
21 hundred teachers subject to potential layoff, and some schools
22 losing ten percent of their faculty; and
23

24 WHEREAS, the Department of Health defines frontline
25 essential workers as those "whose duties must be performed on-
26 site and require being in close proximity to the public or
27 coworkers, and are essential to the functioning of society"; and
28

29 WHEREAS, teachers and school-level personnel are expected
30 to continue to show up to work directly with students or work at
31 schools where students are going to a campus to receive
32 services; and
33



1 WHEREAS, for purposes of vaccine distribution, the State
2 has placed teachers and educational support staff in the 1b
3 category, which includes those deemed "frontline essential
4 workers", such as first responders, corrections officers, child
5 care providers, emergency services dispatchers, U.S. Postal
6 Service employees, and others; and

7
8 WHEREAS, reopening schools is critical to reopening the
9 economy, ensuring childcare for the State's workforce, and
10 maintaining a stable learning environment for students; and

11
12 WHEREAS, updated guidelines from the Centers for Disease
13 Control show that all of Hawaii's counties were in the lowest-
14 risk category and could safely reopen; and

15
16 WHEREAS, the Department of Education recently announced
17 that all Hawaii elementary schools could reopen for in-person
18 learning by the end of March 2021; now, therefore,

19
20 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
21 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021,
22 that the Governor is urged to maintain teachers and school-level
23 personnel as essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic or
24 any future pandemic, when contemplating emergency furloughs and
25 layoffs; and

26
27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
28 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Superintendent of
29 Education, Executive Director of the Board of Education, and
30 President of the Hawaii State Teachers Association.

