

RE: S.R. No. 45

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2021  
State of Hawaii  
Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.R. No. 45 entitled:

"SENATE RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO CREATE A MODEL STATEWIDE SCHOOL POLICY ON STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION IN GRADES K-12,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to request the Department of Education to convene a working group to create a model statewide school policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from The Trevor Project and six individuals.

Your Committee finds that suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for children between the ages of ten and fourteen and is the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. In Hawaii, suicide accounts for twenty-five percent of all fatal injuries. From 2013-2015, the statewide suicide rate was 12.9 deaths for every one hundred thousand individuals. The percentage of teenagers in the State who plan to commit suicide and the percentage of teenagers who attempt suicide are amongst the highest in the nation. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth are more likely to experience suicidal ideation, engage in self-injury, consider suicide, and attempt suicide. Additionally, 39.7 percent of homeless youth have had suicidal thoughts and among those who consider suicide, 58.3 percent of individuals attempted suicide.

Your Committee further finds that suicide attempts have harmful, lasting, and profound impacts on families and communities. School personnel who interact with students daily are essential gatekeepers for recognizing warning signs of suicide and making the appropriate referrals for help. Your Committee also finds that the stress of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and its impacts on education and other stressors have increased mental health issues and suicide risks among youth. Therefore, your Committee believes that the Department of Education should convene a working group to create a model statewide policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.R. No. 45 and recommends its adoption.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Committee on Education,

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MICHELLE N. KIDANI, Chair