



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF HAWAII
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PRESS STATEMENT

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REPRESENTATIVE GENE WARD'S POSITION ON FURLOUGHS

Furloughing educators during scheduled classroom times is inexcusable. Of all our investments, we should not cut back on education. We need to do whatever is necessary, including raiding the Hurricane Relief Fund and the Rainy Day Fund, to get our kids back in the classroom. However, restoring these funds will, at best, give us back our already fragile system, which has left Hawaii's keiki behind nationally and internationally. With 163 school days, children in Hawaii will go to school over 2 months less than students in China and Indonesia, whose students go to school 220 school days a year. We need to develop long-term solutions, such as:

- **Increasing the mandatory school year to 200 days so Hawaii students can compete INTERNATIONALLY with students from countries that are scoring exponentially higher than Americans.**
- **Enacting legislation that will expedite the processes for schools to convert waiver days and other development days to instructional days.**
- **Enacting legislation that will expedite the processes for schools to extend their school days because even 20 minutes a day would make a difference.**

Following today's first Friday Furlough, parents and family members must keep the heat on all government officials, particularly the Legislature who has the majority of the power to enact these changes and make our students whole, once again. A mind is a terrible thing to waste and dumbing down our kids' education is not the way we should go.

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