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## House OKs \$10 billion budget

*Plan makes cuts to public education, despite \$50M for teacher furloughs*

### Advertiser Staff

The state House yesterday approved a \$10 billion state budget for the fiscal year starting July 1 that is \$41.2 million less than Gov. Linda Lingle requested.

The House version of the budget, which now moves to the Senate for consideration, includes \$50 million to reduce teacher furloughs at public schools, but overall makes cuts to public education.

The cuts include \$18 million from the state Department of Education's weighted student formula that will likely lead to increased class sizes.

The budget also strips \$10 million from the University of Hawai'i.

Lawmakers restored \$3 million for public libraries and would preserve about 1,000 state jobs that Lingle wanted to eliminate, including positions for child protective services and agricultural inspectors.

The state House also voted for a Judiciary budget that makes cuts to the court system but provides an additional \$1.5 million for specialty courts, such as drug courts for nonviolent offenders that emphasize treatment over incarceration.

State Rep. Marcus Oshiro, D-39th (Wahiawā), chairman of the House Finance Committee, said lawmakers made targeted cuts

rather than the across-the-board approach adopted by the governor.

Oshiro also was critical of Lingle's decision to delay state income tax refunds and other obligations as a strategy to manage the deficit.

The state is facing a \$1.2 billion budget shortfall through June 2011. The deficit could grow when the state Council on Revenues meets later this week to update its forecast.

State Rep. Gene Ward, R-17th (Kalama Valley, Queen's Gate, Hawai'i Kai), noted the budget depends on generating new revenue or savings through several tax-related bills.

He urged lawmakers not to raise taxes or fees in a recession, calling the bills "job killers."

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NO, I have some rules!

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