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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

the Department of Health and Department of Education are requested to jointly research and examine non-medication alternatives to dealing with children who have difficulty paying attention, have difficulty learning, and display hyperactive behavior, including reallocation of resources to non-medication programs of social, recreational, educational, athletic, artistic, and cultural activities.

WHEREAS, today, at least six million American children are diagnosed with some form of psychiatric disorder requiring medication; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" was added to the American Psychological Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* and within a year, the diagnosis had been given to 500,000 American children, and by 1997, the figure had reached 4,400,000 children; and

WHEREAS, among the symptoms indicative of "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" are descriptions such as "has difficulty playing quietly," "often talks excessively," "often loses things," "is easily distracted," "has difficulty awaiting turns

in games," "blurts out answers to questions," and "has difficulty following instructions"; and

WHEREAS, the problem is not limited to the United States as evidenced by the growth in the number of stimulant medication prescriptions given to British children, which increased from 3,500 in 1993 to 126,000 in 1998; and

WHEREAS, compared to the overwhelming numbers of American children diagnosed with either "attention deficit disorder" or "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder," it is both instructive and enlightening to note that in certain other countries such as Japan and China, this type of diagnosis is not nearly as prevalent in children of comparable ages; and

WHEREAS, various jurisdictions in America and around the world have proposed using alternative means to address behavioral, attention, and learning difficulties such as in Sweden, where it was proposed that all health and medical personnel be educated on alternative, natural methods of treating children who display hyperactive behavior, and in Colorado, where the State Board of Education called for teachers to use academic rather than medical solutions; and

WHEREAS, in Hawaii, children diagnosed with "attention deficient disorder" or "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" qualify for special education benefits under the *Felix v. Cayetano* consent decree; and

WHEREAS, it may be appropriate to allocate some of these resources for alternative methods to address the problem such as constructing playgrounds and parks and by providing other productive programs of useful activities for children to work off their excess youthful energy; and

WHEREAS, it may be appropriate to have parents, educators, and others involved in the school community to learn more about the educational challenges facing "attention deficit disorder" or "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" children, including the effect, both positive and negative, of certain levels of medication, and the effect of creative classroom techniques and physical activity; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2001, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Health and the Department of Education are jointly requested to increase

efforts to educate parents, the school community, and other interested parties in regards to the diagnosis and treatment of children with "attention deficit disorder" or "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" and to study the use and effectiveness of medication utilized to improve the child's educational opportunities, as well as research, examine, and recommend non-medication and other appropriate alternatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and the Department of Education are further jointly requested to research and examine non-medication alternatives to dealing with children who have difficulty paying attention, have difficulty learning, and display hyperactive behavior, including reallocation of resources to non-medication programs of social, recreational, educational, athletic, artistic, and cultural activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and the Department of Education are requested to submit a report of their findings and recommendations, including any necessary proposed legislation, to the Governor and the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2002; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health and the Superintendent of Education.