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HSE OF REPS/SENATE

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

HONOLULU

February 8, 2012

The Honorable Calvin Say
Speaker of the House
State Capitol, Suite 431
Honolulu, HI 96813

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

No. 211

Dear Speaker Say:

In accordance with Section 9, Article VII of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii, I am respectfully requesting your immediate consideration and passage of House Bill No. 2547, Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services. In its current form, this measure appropriates funds to address the budget shortfall for General Support for Health Care Payments (HMS 902). We respectfully request that the Legislature amend this measure to appropriate funds to address the budget shortfall for the General Assistance program (HMS 204). Attached is a proposed HD1.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter. The Department of Human Services will be available to answer any questions you or your staff may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Abercrombie".

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor, State of Hawaii

Attachment

___ .B. NO. ___

A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. This Act is recommended by the governor for
2 immediate passage in accordance with section 9 of article VII of
3 the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

4 SECTION 2. A critical funding emergency exists. The
5 general assistance program (HMS 204) will expend all
6 appropriated funds before the end of the current fiscal year
7 2011-2012. Pursuant to section 346-53(b), Hawaii Revised
8 Statutes, the general assistance program is a block grant
9 program; the maximum allowance a general assistance recipient
10 may receive is determined by dividing the amount of the
11 appropriation by the number of general assistance recipients.

12 Due to increasing general assistance caseloads, the
13 department reduced monthly general assistance payments in
14 October 2011 from \$344 to \$319 a month. Caseloads continue to
15 rise and the department is unable to maintain the current
16 maximum \$319 per month general assistance payment benefit to
17 approximately 5,584 disabled recipients for the duration of the

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1 funding year. In the absence of an emergency appropriation,
2 general assistance payments will be reduced to \$268 a month in
3 March 2012. This amount is not enough to cover living and
4 housing expenses for individuals who have no other viable means
5 of support.

6 Stopping the grant payment or reducing the amount of the
7 grant payment for these individuals poses a real threat to the
8 individuals' health and safety and is likely to result in
9 increased homelessness. To avoid further reductions of general
10 assistance payments additional funds are urgently needed.

11 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$736,478 or so much
13 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 to be used
14 for general assistance payments (HMS 204).

15 SECTION 4. The sum appropriated shall be expended by the
16 department of human services for the purposes of this Act.

17 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

18

19 INTRODUCED BY: _____

20 BY REQUEST

21

_____.B. NO._____

Report Title:

General Assistance (HMS 204); Emergency Appropriation

Description:

Makes an emergency appropriation from the general revenues of the State of Hawaii for fiscal year 2011-2012 to address the budget shortfall in for the general assistance program (HMS 204) in the Department of Human Services.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.