



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment and Human Services

Time: 1:45 p.m.

Date: March 19, 2018

Where: State Capitol Room 224

TESTIMONY

By Kamuela Cobb-Adams

RE: HB 2670, HD2, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

E nā Luna Ho‘omalū Gabbard a me Green, nā Hope Luna Ho‘omalū Riviere a me Chang, a me nā Lālā o nā Kōmike, aloha! My name is Kamuela Cobb-Adams and I serve as the O‘ahu Island Director of Regional Strategies for the Community Engagement and Resources Group of Kamehameha Schools.

We are writing to support HB2670 HD2, which requires the Department of Agriculture to create a farmers’ market matching program for beneficiaries of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

If enacted, this bill provides immediate financial support to low-income families that face difficult decisions on how to spend their limited dollars each day. The future impacts from better diet and nutrition are significant. The Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network estimates that \$470 million has been spent as a state on obesity-related medical costs, yet one in four kindergartners in Hawaii are overweight or obese. By gaining access to fresh, locally grown food, the health and wellness of our most vulnerable communities are addressed proactively, thereby reducing the long term healthcare costs to the state, increasing the overall health and wellness of Hawai‘i’s people and improving cognitive functions for children in classrooms.

This bill also provides farmers with an immediate opportunity to increase sales with customers that otherwise would not be able to purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables. As time passes, this immediate sales increase begins to translate into viability for a beloved but struggling profession with 60 years being the average age of Hawai‘i’s farmers. Given our statewide goals to increase local food production, implementing win-win programs as addressed in this bill would help the state by not only sustaining the current farmers but also attracting the next generation as well.

The Food Basket on Hawai‘i Island has successfully implemented a pilot of the same type of matching program defined in this bill. The dollar-for-dollar matching was deployed in a CSA

(Community Supported Agriculture) program, a KTA Superstore POS (Point of Sale) program and a farmers' markets program. In just four months, the programs resulted in \$40,000 in locally grown produce, \$20,000 of which was federal dollars staying in the state. The potential economic impacts are significant. On Hawai'i Island alone, the community coalition called Let's Make SNAP Happen estimated that as much as \$30 million in economic activity could be added to Hawaii Island's economy if SNAP participation increased to close to 100%.

Another exemplar on O'ahu is the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center's Makeke Farmers' Market in Waianae. Makeke was one of the first markets enabling SNAP recipients to use their EBT cards and had almost \$140,000 in SNAP sales last year, \$72,000 in fresh, local foods.

These short and long-term impacts to Hawai'i's families and farmers that would emerge from the passage of this bill are both meaningful and timely. O'ahu and Hawai'i Island pilots have shown that this type of programming works in our state.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia. No task is too large when we all work together! Mahalo nui

From: candee.rillon@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Candee Rillon](#)
To: [AEN Testimony](#)
Subject: Strong Support of HB2670 HD2, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Date: Monday, March 19, 2018 11:18:04 AM

Dear Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Gil Riviere, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

The Honorable Josh Green, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

Hrg: March 19, 2018 at 1:45PM at Conference Room 224

I am writing in strong support of HB2670 HD2, which improves access to affordable, healthy, and local fresh fruits and vegetables by creating a matching incentive program for beneficiaries of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

A matching incentive program that is made available in farmers' markets will help to reduce food insecurity and improve dietary behaviors among many of Hawaii's low-income families. Providing a dollar-for-dollar match for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables will increase the purchasing power of SNAP participants as it frees up room in their budget for other equally essential expenditures such as housing and health care.

Healthy produce incentives will also improve healthy eating behaviors among Hawaii's low-income families. With food costs so much higher in Hawaii than on the mainland, many SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) participants often spend their SNAP dollars on low-priced unhealthy options. Poor dietary behaviors are associated with obesity, heart diseases and other chronic diseases.

The implementation of a local incentive program will also support local farmers and boost the economy. Healthy produce incentives encourage more spending by local markets and can increase farmers' income and customer base.

A matching incentive program is good for public health and the economy. I strongly support HB2670 HD2 and respectfully ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Sincerely,
Candee Rillon
Keaau, HI 96749

From: levin@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Mark Levin](#)
To: [AEN Testimony](#)
Subject: Strong Support of HB2670 HD2, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Date: Monday, March 19, 2018 11:03:17 AM

Dear Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

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The Honorable Gil Riviere, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

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A matching incentive program is good for public health and the economy. I strongly support HB2670 HD2 and respectfully ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Sincerely,
Mark Levin
Honolulu, HI 96822

From: Jenna22@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Jenna Lee](#)
To: [AEN Testimony](#)
Subject: Strong Support of HB2670 HD2, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Date: Monday, March 19, 2018 12:01:27 PM

Dear Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Gil Riviere, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
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A matching incentive program is good for public health and the economy. I strongly support HB2670 HD2 and respectfully ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Sincerely,
Jenna Lee
Honolulu, HI 96822