

LATE



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Date: April 4, 2018

Where: State Capitol Room 211

TESTIMONY

By Kamuela Cobb-Adams

RE: HB2670 HD2 SD1, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

E ka Luna Ho‘omalua Dela Cruz, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalua Keith-Agaran, a me nā Lālā o kēia 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 the intent of HB2670 HD2 SD1, which requires and appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture to create a local produce dollar-for-dollar matching program for beneficiaries of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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. KS supports the intent of this measure and trusts in the legislature to determine the proper funding mechanism to support this bill.

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



Wednesday, April 4th, 2018 at 10:30am
Conference Room 211

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith Agaran, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: **Testimony in Support of HB 2670, HD 2, SD 1
Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

My name is Michael Robinson and I am Vice President of Government Relations and Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system with over 70 locations statewide including medical centers, clinics, physicians and other caregivers serving Hawai'i and the Pacific Region with high quality, compassionate care. Its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox – specialize in innovative programs in women's health, pediatric care, cardiovascular services, cancer care, bone and joint services and more. Hawai'i Pacific Health is recognized nationally for its excellence in patient care and the use of electronic health records to improve quality and patient safety

I testify in support of HB 2570, HD 2, SD 1 which creates a healthy produce incentive program in the Department of Agriculture for SNAP participants. The program would give those on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$20 for the purchase of local fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets which would benefit both SNAP participants and local farmers.

This farmers' market incentive program doubles the purchasing power of Hawaii's low-income families. With food costs estimated to be 61% higher in Hawaii than on the mainland, many SNAP participants spend their SNAP dollars at large national discount food chains on cheap processed food because many lower income families can't afford healthier options. Evaluation data from similar programs in other states have shown that such programs effectively support low-income families in affecting improvements in their dietary behaviors.

Nutrition incentives increase sales and farm income by increasing local farmers' customer base, effectively keeping federal funding circulating in our local economy. Using the USDA's economic multiplier coefficients, the \$1.6 million in SNAP at Hawai'i

farmers' markets (2016) generates nearly double the economic impact, by encouraging more spending by local businesses.

Hawai'i Pacific Health is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the people of Hawai'i. This measure will improve the nutritious food options available to low-income families. Healthy dietary behavior is a huge determinant of long term health outcomes. Through incentivizing the purchase of local fresh produce, this program will also decrease healthcare costs over these families lifetimes.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in support of HB 2670, HD 2, SD 1.

April 4, 2018

LATE

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Mandy Finlay, Director of Public Policy
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **HB 2670, HD2, SD1 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211, April 4, 2018, 10:30 AM

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), we are writing to strongly support HB 2670, HD2, SD1, which creates a dollar-for-dollar matching program for the supplemental nutrition assistance program at farmer's markets.

This measure would help low-income families to make healthier choices with their meals. In Hawaii, more than one in four kindergartners are overweight or obese. As a state, we spend an estimated \$470 million annually on obesity-related medical costs. Hawaii's children also have one of the highest rates of dental caries (cavities) in the nation, double the national average. These figures underscore the need to improve access to healthy food and beverages to ensure that the children of Hawaii can make healthy choices to prevent obesity and dental decay.

Hawaii has the highest food costs in the nation and fresh, locally-grown produce is often more costly than processed foods. By creating double the value of SNAP benefits when purchasing fresh produce at the farmer's market, this measure would make healthy food a more affordable option and help to alleviate the negative health outcomes associated with poverty, leading to healthier keiki.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that your Committee vote to pass this bill.

HCAN is a Hawaii based non-profit committed to building a unified voice advocating for Hawaii's children by improving their safety, health, and education.