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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

JOVANIE DOMINGO DELA CRUZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA
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IN REPLY, REFER TO:
OCS 23.1056

February 10, 2023

To: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair,
The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Human Services

Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Videoconference

From: Jovanie Domingo dela Cruz, Executive Director
DLIR – Office of Community Services

Position: Support

Re: H.B. 314 RELATING TO FOOD BANKS

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

This bill would appropriate funds to the Office of Community Services (OCS) to distribute these funds to food banks so that they could purchase food and distribute it to qualifying low-income people to supplement their food needs. The bill would require that the funds be allocated among the counties pursuant to the methodology that OCS uses in administering The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), our largest federal food security program.

The bill would appropriate sums, in amounts to be identified, for the two upcoming State fiscal years – FY 2023-2024, which starts on July 1, 2023, and FY 2024-2025, which starts on July 1, 2024. The funds would allow food banks to pay for “the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need.” Up to 15 percent of the appropriation could be used for administrative costs.

II. CURRENT LAW

Currently, Hawaii has no legislation at the State level in which a State agency receives appropriations to purchase food and distribute it, through food banks, to low-income people in the State. OCS currently administers federal programs that

perform similar functions, notably TEFAP – The Emergency Food Assistance Program. Under TEFAP, OCS receives large amounts of surplus food from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that is distributed through Hawaii food banks as the primary agencies, which in turn distribute the food through smaller secondary agencies to recipient low-income people in the State.

Recently, USDA introduced a very small supplemental program within TEFAP that provides \$25,000 to the State of Hawaii for a farm-to-food bank program. OCS administers this program through contracts with Hawaii Foodbank and with The Food Basket, which is the food bank for the Island of Hawaii.

III. COMMENTS ON THE BILL

The Office of Community Services **supports** the intent of H.B. 314.

OCS has three primary areas of inquiry with the bill. The first involves procurement issues relating to which food banks would participate in the food distribution. Currently, no specific food banks are identified in the bill and there is no formal definition of “food bank” in the bill. Thus, it is not clear whether the appropriation should go ONLY to the three food banks that OCS works with in administering TEFAP, or whether other agencies that function as food banks would be eligible to receive a portion of the funding. OCS currently works with the following food banks for TEFAP: Hawaii Foodbank for Oahu and Kauai, Maui Food Bank for Maui County, and The Food Basket for Hawaii County.

If the Legislature intends that the appropriation be made for these specific food banks, it would be best for the Legislature to name them in the bill. If that happens, OCS can immediately enter into contracts with them through procurement exemptions. If the Legislature wants to allow other agencies to participate, then OCS would need to issue a Request for Proposals, after issuing a Request for Information. An open procurement process would delay the commencement of the program but would allow other food distribution agencies to participate.

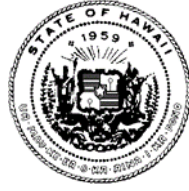
A second area of inquiry relates to food selection. Currently, the bill does not require the administering agencies to focus on, for example, canned commodities. By contrast, other bills that have been introduced in the past two years have expressly stated that the agencies can and should purchase **fresh** foods produced in Hawaii. This would improve the quality of food available to people needing this support and it would help local farmers and keep more funds within Hawaii. Does the Legislature want to make such a provision in this bill, or does it want to leave food selection to the food banks?

Re: H.B. 314 RELATING TO FOOD BANKS
February 10, 2023
Page 3

A third set of questions relates to administrative costs. As the bill is currently written, it appears that the sums to be available for administrative costs – fifteen percent of the overall total – are intended to be for the food banks, without any portion for OCS. Since the bill currently does not yet specify the amount of funds to be appropriated, OCS cannot comment specifically on whether OCS would need additional funding and/or staffing for itself to handle the additional administrative work that this bill would impose on OCS's own current staff and budget. Accordingly, at this point OCS simply asks that the Legislature be open to allowing for a portion of the appropriation to be available for OCS to use for its own administrative responsibilities in implementing the bill. If the appropriation is very large, OCS might need additional staff to administer it, and would hope that the Legislature would authorize one additional FTE staff person for OCS.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 11, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 314 – RELATING TO FOOD BANKS.**

Hearing:

Tuesday, February 14, 2023, Time 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill and defers to the Office of Community Services as to administrative and budget needs. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds to the office of community services for the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need in accordance with the emergency food assistance program's methodology to determine allocations to each of the four counties.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's attention to the continuing nutritional needs of Hawaii's low-income residents as federal pandemic benefits are ending. The Department administers the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Since March 2020, SNAP has provided recipient households additional monthly SNAP benefits authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). This additional benefit is

known as the Supplemental Emergency Allotment (EA). The minimum monthly EA amount issued is \$95, though the average household monthly EA amount has been \$199. The EA program has also helped boost revenue for local retailers.

Significantly, per the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, the last EA payment will be in March 2023. The end of the EA benefits will directly impact approximately 87,000 households statewide to maintain their nutritional needs. In addition, while the October 2022 increase in the minimum wage and January 2023 Social Security cost of living adjustment increased many residents' income, for SNAP recipients, these increases in monthly income decreased the monthly amount of SNAP benefits. Providing OCS with additional funds to purchase food and distribute it will provide additional food resources for low-income residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services
Tuesday, February 14, 2023; 9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 0314, RELATING TO FOOD BANKS.

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS THE INTENT** House Bill No. 0314, RELATING TO FOOD BANKS.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, to fund the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need. The funds would be expended by the Office of Community Services of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely threatened the health and welfare of our citizens, especially Hawaii's underprivileged and rural communities. With so many people unemployed and underemployed, entire families are struggling to put food on the table on a consistent basis. Even as the public health emergency draws to a close, families continue to struggle.

Because of this, it is imperative that the Legislature shore up Hawaii's social service safety net of which the network of food banks is a vital component. This is especially warranted in light of record general fund surpluses and the possibility of economic downturns in the near future.

Testimony on House Bill No. 0314
Tuesday, February 14, 2023; 9:30 a.m.
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On a technical note, we observe that this bill might be in conflict with Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and could be construed as facilitating direct state funding to private entities. Because of this, the HPCA strongly urges this committee to consult with the Majority Attorney for clarification on legal check.

Despite this technical observation, the HPCA strongly urges your favorable consideration of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



Committee on Human Services

Tues. February 14, 2023 - 9:30 a.m.
RE: H.B. 314: Relating to Food Banks

Aloha Harvest

County of Hawai'i

Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based
Economic Development

Hawai'i Appleseed

Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Food Bank

Hawai'i Good Food Alliance

Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Health
Center

Lanakila Pacific

Malama Kaua'i

Maui Food Bank

Parents and Children Together

The Hawai'i Food Basket

Supersistence

Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health
Center

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 314: Relating to Food Banks, which would appropriate funds to the office of community services for the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need in accordance with existing methodology to determine allocations to each of the four counties.

One in six Hawai'i residents are experiencing food insecurity—meaning they lack reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. (1) Many of these households fall into the asset-limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE) population with incomes too high to receive financial assistance, but too low to survive. In these times, communities rely on food banks, food pantries, and other forms of charitable feeding to care for some of our most vulnerable citizens. When these communities come knocking, our food banks and emergency food system have repeatedly answered the call—no matter how large.

Hawai'i's food banks and their partners serve a critical role ensuring that those who are food insecure do not go hungry by sourcing, inspecting, and distributing over 21 million pounds of food in the last fiscal year alone. Food banks are experiencing increased demand like never before, seeing a more than 60% increase in food distributed from pre-pandemic distribution levels. (2)



Aloha Harvest

County of Hawai'i

Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based
Economic Development

Hawai'i Appleseed

Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Food Bank

Hawai'i Good Food Alliance

Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Health
Center

Lanakila Pacific

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Maui Food Bank

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Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health
Center

The food banks have the trusted relationships and purchasing power to source efficiently and distribute food equitably through their network of partners. They now need to be regularly supported by the state for the life-saving services that they provide to Hawai'i's citizens. Many states provide funding for food banks to purchase food to ensure they meet food insecurity needs.

Dollars for food purchase are important to our food system because they:

- Support food banks' ability to purchase items people want – nutrient dense foods like produce and protein are most requested.
- Expands food banks' ability to purchase local foods, which are often limited and more expensive; and
- Allows food banks to be more thoughtful about nutrition and purchase healthier items

Food banks are a critical safety net in our food and disaster response system that need stable, core funding to operate as efficiently and effectively as our communities need them to. Please pass H.B. 314.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

(1) [Hawaii Health Matters - Projected Food Insecurity Rate](#)

(2) [Hawai'i Foodbank Has a New Model for Feeding 120,000 People a Month - Hawaii Business Magazine](#)

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network is composed of advocates statewide dedicated to connecting communities and taking action to ensure all people in Hawai'i have enough food to live healthy, dignified, productive lives.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 14, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

TESTIMONY ON HB 314
RELATING TO FOOD BANKS

Room 329 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice-Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 314, which appropriates funds to the office of community services for the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need in accordance with the emergency food assistance program's methodology to determine allocations to each of the four counties.

The Coronavirus Pandemic has disrupted Hawai'i's local food systems and caused many local producers to lose their local markets. Many catered to tourism, large-scale events, hotels, restaurants, cruise ships, farmers' markets, and school lunch programs, which were non-existent during Hawai'i's shutdown.

Like small businesses around the state, without open and consistent markets, local farmers and ranchers will decrease food production levels and will likely downsize and/or go out of business. To help address the state's food security during the pandemic, Hawai'i's food banks partnered with local food producers to ensure that farmers and ranchers could survive.

After urgent health issues, feeding our community is the most critical challenge we face in the continuing coronavirus pandemic. With no clear end to the crisis within sight, we are already seeing the attention of leaders from around the world shift as food producer markets contract and transportation networks are shaken to their core.

During the pandemic, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau partnered with Hawai'i's food banks to provide local agricultural produce and proteins for their food assistance programs. This partnership provided nearly \$3,000,000 of locally grown, high-quality, nutritious

produce to our communities in need. We were also a food partner at the Foodbank's mass food distributions which provided locally grown produce for over 50,000 families. As an organization that aggregates and distributes food, the Hawai'i Foodbank staff brought valuable logistical insight to these events. The combined efforts of the Hawai'i Foodbank, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau, and other partner organizations allowed tens of thousands of families to have access to food during unprecedented times. This win-win partnership connected local producers that lost markets and revenue sources due to COVID-19 with the Hawai'i Foodbank to meet the increased demands of feeding Hawai'i's communities.

The dedicated funding for the emergency food assistance program will provide funds to Hawai'i's food banks that support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing community meals during emergencies. This also will help keep Hawai'i's farmers farming while also providing nutritional food to those who need it most. More than ever, the State of Hawai'i needs to assure local food production to meet the needs of the hundreds of thousands of Hawai'i families affected by this emergency and future emergencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



February 13, 2023

Rep. John Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

RE: Testimony in strong support of HB 314, Relating to Food Banks

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I **strongly support HB 314**, which would appropriate funds to the office of community services for the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need in accordance with the emergency food assistance program's methodology to determine allocations to each of the four counties.

Food security is a critical issue in Hawai'i, and the State Emergency Food Assistance Program (SEFAP) established in 2022 provides important support to meet this ongoing need.

- Hawai'i has the highest cost of living in the nation, and food security is an ongoing challenge – one in six residents lacks comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. One in four children is food insecure.
- The pandemic amplified the need, and the network of food banks responded by significantly increasing purchases to provide for our communities. We continue to serve 50% more people than we did prior to the pandemic. Inflation and increased food prices make it difficult for many families to make ends meet, and puts pressure on the charitable food system as well.
- Downturns in retail donations and USDA commodities have changed the food bank model. We purchase food efficiently and ensure we distribute equitably through our network of community partners.
- Purchasing food allows us to buy items that people want and need, rather than relying exclusively on donated and USDA commodity foods. We consistently hear requests for fresh produce and healthy protein, and SEFAP funds allow us to meet this demand and support the health and well-being of those we serve.
- Food banks are able to really stretch a dollar due to our relationships with producers, manufacturers, and distributors both locally and on the mainland. For each dollar received by Hawai'i Foodbank, we can provide food for more than two meals.
- Many other states support their network of food banks with core funding for food security needs.

Hawai'i Foodbank gathers donated, rescued, USDA commodity and purchased food and distributes it to those in need through our network of more than 200 agency partners. Ongoing, core funding allows us to purchase healthy foods, which helps us better support our agency partners who directly serve our communities and ensure no one goes hungry.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Amy Miller Marvin
President and CEO, Hawaii Foodbank



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State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public Defender

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community Health
Worker Initiative

COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective

Date: February 11, 2023

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Human Services

Re: Support for HB314, Relating to Food Banks

Hrg: Tuesday, February 14, 2023, at 9:30 AM, Conf Rm 329

The Obesity Prevention Task Force (OPTF), a program of Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ (HIPHI), is in **support of HB 314**, which would provide funding for the food bank system in Hawai'i.

Many people can benefit.

In Hawai'i, 1 in 10 people faces hunger, including 1 in 6 children. The cost to meet the demands of the more than 130,000 people in Hawai'i facing hunger is over \$80 million per year.ⁱⁱ

Many people in need do not qualify for SNAP benefits and depend on the food bank system for their meals. The demand for food is increasing, as Food Banks are giving out more food now than in previous years.ⁱⁱⁱ

Strengthen the safety net by funding food access.

The Hawai'i food bank system largely depends on private donations to help feed people. These donations help to provide a public good to our communities. This bill will bring state funding to those in need and not force food banks and their customers to rely solely on the generosity of private donors.

Food and housing are major financial obstacles in Hawai'i. Because there are few affordable state housing options for people, tens of thousands of residents leave for more affordable options. It is time for the state to support the social safety net to feed those who can barely afford housing and food.^{iv} Other states provide funding to support their food banks, and it is time for Hawai'i to do so.

Rising costs have made procuring food more difficult.

The increased cost of living worldwide has led to decreased donations to the Food Bank system. As prices rise for everyone, donations decline. The decrease in private donations has led to a food shortage for the Food Basket over the past year because private donations have fallen so sharply that they require significantly more funds to purchase food.^v This situation is not unique to the Food Basket. All food banks need more support to provide food to those who need it. The State of Hawai'i can be a partner by funding the food banks so they can meet the needs of our community.

Mahalo,



Nate Hix
Food Access Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force comprises over 60 statewide organizations and makes recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and healthcare environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hawaii>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/09/people-are-really-struggling-hawaii-food-banks-scramble-to-meet-increased-demand/>

^{iv} <https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/01/hawaiis-population-drain-outpaces-most-states-again/>

^v <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2022/09/26/hawaii-news/demand-grows-at-food-banks/>



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 12, 2023

To: The Honorable Representative John Mizuno, Chair
The Honorable Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

From: Kristin Frost Albrecht, Executive Director
The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 314, Relating to appropriating funds to support Hawai'i's Food Banks

Aloha Chair Mizuno and Vice Chair Amato,

My name is Kristin Frost Albrecht, and I am the Executive Director of The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank. Our mission is to "End hunger in Hawaii County". We strongly support this bill.

The impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic have heightened the issues of food insecurity and hunger in our state to new levels. Due to the ongoing economic impacts of the pandemic on Hawai'i Island, our food banks in Kona and Hilo have faced the highest need in our thirty-four-year history, with record numbers of residents needing our services. Although the economy is improving, we are still serving over three times more than we served pre-pandemic as our residents' grapple with the long-term impacts of the pandemic, as well as the rising costs of rent, groceries, gas, and utilities.

Due to ongoing breaks in the supply chain, the need remains high and is forecast to remain high for the next couple of years; federal commodities are falling; and philanthropy, while still higher than pre-pandemic levels, is much reduced over the height of the pandemic. Food banks are a critical safety net in our food and disaster response system that need stable, core funding to operate as efficiently and effectively as our communities need them too. The State's food banks need support to continue to ensure no-one goes hungry.

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director, The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

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ALBRECHT

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Testimony Presented to
Senate Committee on Government Operations
February 14, 2023, 9:30 p.m., Conference Room 329 VIA Videoconference

SUBJECT: Support for HB314 – RELATING TO FOOD BANKS

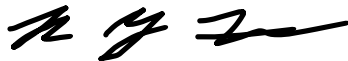
Chair John Mizuno, Vice Chair Terez Amato, & members of the Committee on Human Services:

Lanakila Pacific strongly supports HB314 relating to the State Emergency Food Assistance Program (SEFAP). Hawai'i's food banks and their partners serve a critical role ensuring that those who are food insecure do not go hungry by sourcing, inspecting, and distributing over 21 million pounds of food in the last fiscal year alone. The troubling increase in demand for services coupled with the decline in donations and a desire to provide nutritious balanced meals makes it necessary to provide funding to purchase food. Food banks have the power to source efficiently and distribute food through network partners. The SEFAP is a good investment.

Lanakila Pacific is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides services and social enterprise programs to build independence and improve the quality of life for individuals with cognitive, physical, social, or age-related challenges. The Lanakila Meals on Wheels Program partners with the Hawaii Foodbank to ensure the seniors we serve do not go hungry.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Respectfully,



Rona Yagi Fukumoto
President & CEO

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LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

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Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Charlie Gustafson, Tamura Super Market, *Immediate Past Chair*

1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@hawaiifood.com

TO: Committee on Human Services

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: Tuesday, February 14, 2023
TIME: 9:30am
PLACE: Via Videoconference

RE: Relating to Food Banks

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. As the measure notes our state's food banks are essential every day in ensuring that food insecure individuals in Hawaii have access to food. In times of natural disasters or other crisis our food banks have also been tasked with taking the lead on mass feedings.

Unfortunately, due to the high cost of living and the recent historic inflation and other factors many people in our state face food insecurity. The food bank is a vital resource for these individuals and families.

These same issues mean that many people in Hawaii cannot afford to buy and store the recommended two weeks of food that experts recommend households have on hand in case of an emergency. Estimates vary but many experts agree that there is less than a week's worth of food in our state at any given time. Hoarding and panic buying by some could shorten that duration. As the agencies tasked with feeding our state in times of crisis it is vital that our food banks are adequately funded in order to fulfil that role, and of course to be able to continue to provide support to those who need it day to day.

We urge the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Tuesday, February 14, 2023 — 9:30 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 314, Relating to Food Banks.

Dear Chair Mizuno and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports HB 314, which Appropriates funds to the Office of Community Services for the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need in accordance with the emergency food assistance program's methodology to determine allocations to each of the four counties.

Over the last few years, one of the most pressing issues for many local families has been food insecurity. With many out of work and surviving on government unemployment support, communities have relied on the efforts of food banks and local food producers to meet their basic need to eat.

Federal monies injected into Hawai'i through county initiatives helped to support a local farm-to-food bank effort, in which food banks were able to purchase local products for distribution to needy communities. This effort was a win-win-win, in that local food producers had a market to sell their products when hotels and restaurants shuttered their doors, local families received fresh and nutritious food products made locally island-wide, and food banks that were struggling to purchase shelf-stable food due to nationwide shortages were rescued by Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers who provided local food to their communities.

The Farm to Food Bank efforts across the state led to many important foundational relationships between local farmers, ranchers, and community feeding organizations that helped struggling communities cope with the social and economic consequences of the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, natural disasters, food supply chain disruptions, and state emergencies have become a harsh, consistent reality for our local communities. Food banks across the state will need support to meet these food security challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

HB-314

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:22:46 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberley Houff	First UMC of Honolulu	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of this Bill to continue the State Emergency Food Assistance Program (SEFAP). First UMC of Honolulu feeds people on Oahu through our foodbank and our meal program on Sunday mornings. We are able to feed more people because of SEFAP. Hawaii Foodbank has waived the fees that we would normally pay for the general food that we receive. This allows us to use the money that is donated to us to purchase items that we have a hard time getting through donations. Please continue this program!



'ELEPAIO
SOCIAL SERVICES
An affiliate of Waianae District Comprehensive Health and Hospital Board, Incorporated

February 14, 2023

Rep. John Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Testimony in support of HB 314, Relating to Food Banks

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members:

I am testifying on behalf of 'Elepaio Social Services, a wholly owned nonprofit corporation of the Waianae District Comprehensive Health and Hospital Board, Incorporated that works alongside the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center in providing much needed social services to the most vulnerable community members residing on Leeward Oahu.

I support HB 314, which would appropriate funds to the office of community services for the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need in accordance with the emergency food assistance program's methodology to determine allocations to each of the four counties.

The Hawaii Foodbank has been our strongest partner in caring for those suffering with food insecurity on the Waianae coast. Since the beginning of our first keiki/school pantry in 2018 and through the pandemic, the Hawaii Foodbank has supported our request to provide healthy food to a community that suffer from the highest rates of food insecurity and poorest health outcomes, a direct correlation to the low food access in Waianae. Today, in partnership with the Hawaii Foodbank, we are operating 8 weekly keiki school pantries, 5 weekly kupuna pantries and quarterly community food distributions. In 2022, with the support of the Hawaii Foodbank, we were able to distribute close to 1.8 million pounds of "good" food to our most vulnerable community members. The Hawaii Foodbank has been vital in providing access to fresh local produce and healthy foods to our community and we strongly support HB 314.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Alicia Higa,
Interim Executive Director

HB-314

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:30:10 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Ellman	The Hawaii Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of **H.B. 314/S.B. 460**: Relating to Food Banks, which would appropriate funds to the office of community services for the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need in accordance with existing methodology to determine allocations to each of the four counties.

One in six Hawai‘i residents are experiencing food insecurity, meaning they lack reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Hawai‘i’s food banks and their partners serve a critical role ensuring that those who are food insecure do not go hungry, and continue to serve significantly more people than prior to the pandemic. The food banks have the trusted relationships and purchasing power to source efficiently and distribute food equitably through their network of partners. They now need to be regularly supported by the state for the life-saving services that they provide to Hawai‘i’s citizens. Many states provide funding for food banks to purchase food to ensure they meet food insecurity needs.

Dollars for food purchase are important to our food system because they:

- Support food banks’ ability to purchase items people want – nutrient dense foods like produce and protein are most requested.
- Expands food banks’ ability to purchase local foods, which are often limited and more expensive; and
- Allows food banks to be more thoughtful about nutrition and purchase healthier items

Food banks are a critical safety net in our food and disaster response system that need stable, core funding to operate efficiently and effectively.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Ellman, Board Member

Hawaii Food Bank



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Human Services

Re: **HB 314 - Relating to Food Banks**

Hawai'i State Capitol, Via Videoconference and Room 329
February 13, 2023, 9:30 AM

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Mmbers,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 314**. This bill appropriates funds to the office of community services for the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to those in need in accordance with the emergency food assistance program's methodology to determine allocations to each of the four counties.

HCAN Speaks! Board
of Directors

Liza Ryan Gill
President

Nick Kacprowski, J.D.
Treasurer

Mandy Fernandes
Secretary

Teri Keliipuleole
Jasmine Slovak
Erica Yamauchi

Nearly half of children in Hawai'i live in households experiencing financial hardship. While almost 1 in 8 are in poverty, an additional one-third of families in Hawaii aren't officially poor but still don't earn enough to afford the basic life essentials.¹ As a result, over 50,000 of our state's keiki, or 1 in 6, face hunger.²

It is well established that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's physical and mental health, behavioral self-control, academic achievement, and earnings as adults.³

That's why it's so important to support Hawai'i's food banks. They and their partner agencies help ensure that struggling families do not go hungry by distributing millions of pounds of food per year to those in need in our state.

Food banks were a lifeline during the pandemic when our state had some of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. But even with folks back at work, the current high inflation has led to our state's food banks to continue to see unprecedented demand. That is unlikely to abate, as Hawai'i had the most expensive groceries in the nation⁴ even before the pandemic, and will continue to do so.

Many other states recognize the crucial role that food banks play in our community by providing them with funding to purchase food that they distribute to families who would otherwise go hungry. Hawai'i should do the same.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo, Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://www.auw.org/sites/default/files/pictures/ALICE-in-Focus-Children-Hawaii%20%283%29.pdf>

² <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hawaii>

³ <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2014/06/childhood-poverty>

⁴ <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>



February 14, 2023

Rep. John Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee
House Committee on Human Services

RE: HB 314, Relating to Food Banks

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members,

I am writing to **SUPPORT** House Bill 314.

My name is Charla Teves. I am a college student and a life-long resident of Honolulu. The news reports about radio djs mocking a popular local singer when she spoke about her experience with childhood food insecurity motivates to support this bill. Their insensitivity opened my eyes to the intensive needs right here in our community. I am asking for your help to adopt policies that will eliminate hunger in our lifetime.

One in five Hawaii children struggle with hunger, according to Feeding America. At more than 55,000 children, they would fill the Stan Sheriff Center four times over and still overflow into the parking lot. In 2021, I was one of 100 students nationwide awarded a Youth Service America and Sodexo Stop Hunger grant which enabled me to convene a Hawai'i virtual end hunger summit. Many state legislators, community leaders, students, and young adults convened to share their ideas such as supporting a statewide food policy and school gardens. I learned so much from the experience that I can no longer remain quiet. Since then, I have volunteered with many food drives and in other ways to help end hunger. Based on these experiences, I know for sure that your support of food banks in Hawaii will make a difference.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-314

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 6:42:58 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, & Committee Members:

Hawai‘i Health & Harm Reduction (HHHRC) supports HB 314, which appropriates funds to the Office of Community Services of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to fund the purchase, storage, and transportation costs of food for distribution to food banks across Hawai‘i.

During the pandemic HHHRC actively partnered with the Hawai‘i Foodbank by hosting food distribution events across O‘ahu, including Kaka‘ako, Pupukea, and Windward Mall. We distributed almost 1 million pounds of food. We currently host a food distribution once per month at the Nā Kūpuna Makamae Community Center in Kaka‘ako.

HHHRC’s mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions. Many of our program clients and participants have also been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-314

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 7:20:49 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB314.

HB-314

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:27:04 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
david gierlach	st elizabeth's church	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With the highest cost of living in the U.S. and our remote location, food insecurity will always be a challenge in Hawai'i.

- One in six Hawai'i residents is food insecure – or lacking reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.
- Hawai'i has one of the highest child insecurity rates in the nation, with one in four children facing food insecurity.

Food banks play a critical role in ensuring no one goes hungry.

- The network of food banks across Hawaii provided an equivalent of more than 21 million meals in the last fiscal year.
- Food banks have relationships and purchasing power to source efficiently and distribute food equitably through our network of partners.
- Food is a fundamental human right and an important way to connect people with a range of services that support health and well-being. Our partnerships with community and human services agencies help us do this.

Food bank models have changed.

- Each of the food banks is purchasing significantly more food than before to meet need.
- As USDA commodities has fallen dramatically and retail stores have cut back donations, food banks must purchase to make up this shortfall.

- Many states support funding for food banks to purchase food to ensure they meet food insecurity needs.

SEFAP was passed in the 2022 legislative session to support food banks in purchasing food. Dollars for food purchase are important to our food system because they:

- supports food banks' ability to purchase items people want – produce and protein are most requested and many ask for basic staples like rice
- expands our ability to purchase local foods, which are often limited and more expensive
- allows us to be more thoughtful about nutrition and purchase healthier items

HB-314

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:34:53 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hunter Heavilin	Supersistence	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The proposed legislation, HB314, would provide much-needed funding to the office of community services to support the purchase, storage, and transportation of food for distribution to those in need. This funding would not only help to ensure that food banks have an adequate supply of nutritious food to distribute to families and individuals, but it would also reduce the financial burden on local food banks, allowing them to expand their reach and serve more people in need.

By supporting this legislation, we can take a crucial step towards combating food insecurity in our communities and helping families and individuals in need access the nutrition they require to thrive. I urge lawmakers to support HB314 and to prioritize funding for food assistance programs that support those who are struggling to put food on the table.