

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2169, S.D. 1

February 22, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2169, S.D. 1.

S.B. No. 2169, S.D. 1, appropriates \$2,000,000 in general funds in FY 23 to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services (OCS) to fund the operating expenses of the four Hawai'i food banks contracted by OCS to administer The Emergency Food Assistance Program in each of the State's counties.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

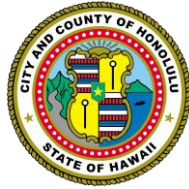
The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR

M ATTHEW GONSER, AICP, CFM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2022, 10:00 A.M.

STATE OF HAWAII
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2169 SD1
RELATING TO FOOD ASSISTANCE**

BY,

MATTHEW GONSER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee(s):

The City and County of Honolulu (“City”) Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) **supports** Senate Bill 2169 SD1, which appropriates funds for operating expenses of the four Hawai‘i food banks contracted by the Office of Community Services to administer the Emergency Food Assistance program in each of the state’s counties.

There was large demand for new feeding programs during the pandemic, prompting grassroots community groups to established food organizations like the Hawai‘i Food Bank to step up their campaigns, and nearly tripling the pounds of food they were distributing overnight. Despite these efforts, the food insecurity rate in Hawai‘i remains high, rising almost 51% since 2019. The Hawai‘i Food Bank on O‘ahu continues to feed well over pre-pandemic rates.

After Hawai‘i spiked from 27th in the nation in 2019 to 11th for food insecurity in a single year, it will be a long road ahead for post-pandemic recovery. Child food insecurity fared worse, jumping from 9th in 2019 to 2nd in 2020. The Hawai‘i Food Bank partner with over 115 sites on O‘ahu and 20 on Kaua‘i, making them the foundation of a large network of food distribution sites.

The Hawai‘i Food Bank demonstrated significant capacity and creativity after the flow of federal and philanthropic funding came in during the height of the pandemic, to not only meet immediate feeding needs but contribute to broader stability of the local food system. For example, the Hawai‘i Food Bank on O‘ahu partnered with Pomai Kulolo to

Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Keith-Agaran
SB2169
February 22, 2022
Page 2

serve poi in many of their food distributions, something that was not seen pre-pandemic. They also continued to support local producers of beef, eggs, fruits and vegetables, opening a new institutional market for our local growers. To continue beneficial partnerships with local farmers and the fruition of further innovation, State funding is needed to continue taking steps forward in our recovery.

Finally, the City, through CCSR and the City's Office of Economic Revitalization, recently established a food security and sustainability program to coordinate City actions and partnerships related to food security, sustainability, and climate resilience. Organizations like the Hawai'i Food Bank will be essential partners with the City moving forward, in addition to collaboration with the State, to meet our common goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2169 SD1.



To: Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of SB2169 SD1

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the committee:

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) strongly supports SB 2169 SD 1 which would increase the amount of funds available for Hawaii's food banks. Food insecurity was already one of Hawaii's biggest challenges prior to the COVID-19 epidemic and it is now reaching a crisis.

HHHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

During 2020 and 2021, HHHRC partnered with the Hawaii Food Bank on food drops around the island and helps disseminate more than 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families and saw first hand how desperate our families are to get healthy and fresh foods that they otherwise could not afford. We need our foodbanks to not only rely on donations but to get the resources they need so adequately address food insecurity in the islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center



February 3, 2022

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

Re: SB 2169 SD1 – Relating to Food Assistance

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2169 SD1, which appropriates funds to fund the operating expenses of the four Hawaii food banks contracted by the Office of Community Services to administer The Emergency Food Assistance Program in each of the State's counties.

HMSA supports the efforts of Hawaii's food banks to address food insecurity in the community. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased food insecurity in Hawaii and has highlighted the growing challenge that families in our community face. As the Chair of the Hawaii Foodbank board of directors I've been able to see the issue up close and the concerning future in which food insecurity will be an ongoing challenge for years to come.

Therefore, we applaud the legislature's efforts to appropriate funds to support Hawaii's food banks to meet the needs of Hawaii residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2169 SD1.

Sincerely,

David R. Herndon
Executive Vice President
Chief Business Operations Officer



TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

DATE/LOCATION: February 22, 2022; 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 211/Video Conference

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2169 SD 1 RELATING TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

We support SB 2169 which appropriates funds to fund the operating expenses of the four Hawaii food banks contracted by the Office of Community Services to administer The Emergency Food Assistance Program in each of the State's counties.

The landscape of our economy has changed, exacerbated by the stressors of the global pandemic, to negatively impact the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society. It has a direct tie to increased financial instability, housing instability, food instability, health instability, increased crime and substance abuse, and strained social, emotional and mental well-being. These impacts have long-lasting and multi-generational consequences and impacts our ability to create healthy and thriving communities. Supporting children and families strengthens the fabric of our entire community. Food is a necessity and we encourage support of our local foodbanks.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to under-resourced families. Assisting more than 17,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 20 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community strengthening programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of SB 2169 SD 1**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



THE SENATE
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2022

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

Tuesday, February 22, 2022, 10:00AM
Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

Re: Testimony in Support of SB2169, SD1 - RELATING TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties. The UPW also represents 1,500 members in the private sector.

UPW **supports** SB2169, SD1, which appropriates funds to fund the operating expenses of the four Hawaii food banks contracted by the Office of Community Services to administer the Emergency Food Assistance Program in each of the State’s counties.

It’s important that we continue to support the Hawaii Food Bank and its mission to address food insecurity. The ongoing COVID pandemic only intensified this need, resulting in the amount of food distributed by the food banks to more than double the volume from years prior to the pandemic. Continued funding of the Emergency Food Assistance Program will help to ensure that these vital services and support for our community remains available across our State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Liz Ho
Administrator



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, February 22, 2022; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2169, SENATE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO FOOD ASSISTANCE.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, 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** Senate Bill No. 2169, Senate Draft 1, RELATING TO FOOD ASSISTANCE.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines 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 \$2,000,000 in general funds for fiscal year 2022-2023 to fund the operating expenses of Hawaii Foodbank, Inc.; Maui Food Bank, Inc.; Hawaii Foodbank, Inc.'s Kauai Branch; and the Food Basket, Inc., for staffing, transportation, food purchase, food storage, and food distribution.

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. All one needs to do is visit one of our member FQHC's food distribution events and see the line of cars and people wait to receive some surplus food. It is shocking yet uplifting to see that people do care for their fellow citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic has likewise greatly exacerbated the need for the Foodbank, its branches, and the Food Basket. This bill would provide desperately needed resources to ensure that the Foodbank, its branches, and the Food Basket will continue to be able to meet the needs of our struggling families.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2169, Senate Draft 1
Tuesday, February 22, 2022; 10:00 a.m.
Page 2

On a technical note, we observe that this bill might be in conflict with Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and could be construed as a private bill that provides state funds directly to a private organization. Because of this, the HPCA strongly urges this committee to consult with the Majority Attorney for clarification on legal check.

With these technical suggestions, 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.



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Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

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

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 22, 2022
TIME: 10am
PLACE: Via Videoconference

RE: SB2169 SD1 Relating to Food Assistance

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.

Our Hawaii food banks are a vital resource for those in our communities dealing with food insecurity. Over the past two years our food banks have had to manage unprecedented demand. The economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the supply chain issues currently impacting the global food supply chain have also effected our food banks. Supporting our local food banks is a direct and necessary way for our State to support those in need in our communities. We are in support of this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



February 18, 2022

Re: SB2169, SD1

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Food insecurity is a critical issue in Hawaii, we ***strongly support*** SB2169, SD1 because:

- Food insecurity levels drastically increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic and remain significantly higher than prior to the pandemic.
- One in six Hawai'i residents is food insecure, including one on four children. Hawai'i has the second highest rate of child food insecurity in the country.
- Many federal support programs such as the federal child tax credit and the federal unemployment relief program have ended, even though families are still struggling.
- Federal food commodity programs and philanthropic support have decreased over last year as well, leaving food banks with less resources while need remains elevated.
- This bill will provide crucial support to our food banks to allow them to continue to meet the food security needs of our community.

The **Hawai'i Hunger Action Network** is a statewide partnership of anti-hunger institutions and advocates working to ensure all people in Hawai'i have enough food and water to live healthy, dignified and productive lives. Our Network members have been actively involved in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring that communities across the State had access to food.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Members of the Hawai'i Hunger Action Network

"Phil" Augustus Acosta, Aloha Harvest

Megan Fox, Malama Kauai

Kristen Frost Albrecht, The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

Rona Fukumoto, Lanakila Pacific

Alicia Higa, Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

Brent Kakesako, Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development

Daniela Kittinger & Gavin Thornton, Hawai'i Appleseed

Daniel Leung, Kapiolani Community College, Culinary Arts Department

Pi'ikea Miller & Chris vanBergeijk, Hawai'i Community Foundation

Amy Miller Marvin & Laura-Kay Rand, Hawai'i Foodbank

Sharon Kaiulani Odom, Kokua Kalihi Valley

Tina Porrás-Jones, Parents and Children Together

Harmonee Williams and Tina Tamai, Hawaii Good Food Alliance

Rich Yust, Maui Food Bank



February 18, 2022

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

RE: Testimony in support of SB2169, Relating to Food Assistance

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members,

As the President and CEO of Hawaii Foodbank, **I am writing in strong support of SB2169**, which would appropriate critical funds to address food insecurity in our State.

Food insecurity is a grave issue in Hawai'i. **One in six Hawai'i residents will struggle with hunger this year, including 82,000 children.** That's approximately one in four keiki who may go to bed hungry, or whose parents or grandparents will choose to go without so that their keiki can eat. **Hawai'i has the second highest rate of child food insecurity in the United States.**

Imagine having to make the choice between buying food for your family or other crucial needs, such as electricity, childcare or medicine. Due to our high cost of living, many hardworking residents are forced to do this on a regular basis. **No one should be in the position to have to make a choice to go hungry.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing economic difficulties for many families and presented new challenges for others who found themselves struggling to put food on the table for the first time. And, food prices have increased significantly during COVID. Grocery prices have gone up 15% in the last two years, and some foods are much more expensive than they were before— the cost of meats, fish, poultry and eggs have risen by 32%. Earlier in the pandemic, many households were kept afloat by unemployment benefits, federal child tax credits, and CARES Act funds, but continued federal pandemic aid is uncertain.

Meanwhile, at Hawaii Foodbank, **we are still serving 50% more people in 2021 than we did in 2019.** Last year, we distributed 23 million pounds of food on O'ahu and 2 million pounds of food on Kaua'i, providing food for more than 20 million meals—about **twice as much food as prior to the pandemic.** We have been able to meet the increased need due to a major increase in federal funds and philanthropy; however, we need support from the State to continue to meet the needs of our community and ensure no-one in our State goes hungry. Already, federal commodity distributions to Hawai'i have decreased substantially over the past year, and philanthropic support, while still higher than before the pandemic, has declined as well.

SB2169 will provide crucial operational support to Hawai'i's food banks and ensure we can continue to provide healthy, nutritious food to those we serve. Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Marvin".

Amy Marvin
President and CEO, Hawaii Foodbank



Date: Tuesday, February 22, 2022

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

From: Peggy Mierzwa, Community & Government Relations

RE: **SB2169SD1** Relating to Food Assistance

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of SB2169 SD1**. This measure would appropriate funding to cover operating expenses of Hawaii Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, Hawaii Foodbank-Kauai, and the Food Basket.

Founded in 1994, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving nearly 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. We are the only Hawai'i health plan that exclusively serves Medicaid patients. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person care, including access to housing and food security, to build a stronger, healthier Hawaii.

When people lose everything, the food banks play a critical role in their lives. SB2169 SD1 will create a Hawai'i emergency food assistance program and fund Hawai'i's food banks so they can continue to meet an essential need of the community. Through the pandemic, the volume of food distribution more than double from prior to the pandemic. The need for food has not diminished although funding from the federal and philanthropic has declined.

Nourished people are healthy people, and without health, our communities fall apart. We appreciate the Legislature's intent to ensure that Hawai'i's food security systems are supported to meet the nutritional needs of Hawai'i's families, including children, seniors, and low-income communities. Recent health and economic events devastated people, families and communities. This funding will help to bring food security to those still in need.

SB2169 SD1 ultimately supports Hawaii residents facing hunger. Mahalo for this opportunity to this measure, which ultimately supports our communities.

We are grateful for your consideration of this important measure.

1357 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1250, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Call: 973-0712 • Toll-free: 1-877-973-0712 • Fax: 808-973-0726 • www.AlohaCare.org



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 22, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2169, SD1
RELATING TO FOOD ASSISTANCE.

Room 211 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, 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 SB 2169, SD1, which appropriates funds to fund the operating expenses of the four Hawai'i food banks contracted by the Office of Community Services to administer The Emergency Food Assistance Program in each of the State's 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 Foodbanks 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.

At the onset of the pandemic, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau partnered with Hawai'i's Foodbank to provide local agricultural produce and proteins for their food assistance programs. This partnership provided nearly \$300,000 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 that Hawai'i's foodbanks 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.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
Tuesday, February 22, 2022 — 10:00 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2169 SD 1, Relating to Food Assistance

Dear Chair Dela Cruz 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; and better management of freshwater and waste.

Ulupono supports SB 2169 SD1, which appropriates funds to fund the operating expenses of the four Hawai'i food banks contracted by the Office of Community Services to administer The Emergency Food Assistance Program in each of the State's counties.

Over the last two 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 farmers 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 farmers 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 this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



February 20, 2022

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

RE: Testimony In Support on SB2169, Relating to Food Assistance

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

I am Wes Perreira, Director of Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i. I am writing in strong support of SB2169, which provides operating support for the food banks in each county working with the Office of Community Services to provide emergency food for people struggling with food insecurity.

Our team has worked with persistent intensity since COVID-19 first shut down the island in March 2020. Even now, two years later, Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i continues to serve more than double number of people each month compared to pre-pandemic numbers. To continue to provide at this level, we have had to increase our budget by more than 50% and have had to add three people to our team. Last year, we distributed nearly two million pounds of food to ensure that individuals and families on Kaua'i had the food needed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created economic challenges for many families on Kaua'i and across the state. Many are struggling to put food on the table for the first time ever. The problem has further increased with the cost of food like meats, fish, and poultry rising above 30% more than what they were before. Federal funds from the CARES Act was a crucial support for many but continued aid is unforeseeable.

Feeding America estimates that it could take several years for households experiencing food insecurity to recover from the pandemic. After the 2008 recession, it took ten years until food insecurity levels returns to the levels they were before the recession. The Hawai'i Foodbank team has had a long history of emergency response and are committed to standing in the gap for Kaua'i families through the long tail of COVID-19.

As you know the north shore of Kaua'i experienced a devastating storm and resulting flooding on April 13 – 15, 2018. Realizing the community impact of the storm, Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i had a truck filled with food and water headed into the area before the rain even stopped. It was an emergency that garnered significant initial media attention and strong philanthropic support. That support waned as the months following the event passed. Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i team continued to serve the Hanalei region with elevated support for 18 months after the flooding, until the community was fully restored.

As with Hawai'i Foodbank on Oahu, the Maui Food Bank, and the Food Basket on Hawai'i Island, Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i is committed to serving our residents who are struggling with food insecurity in each of the four counties. We aspire to give them hope for a better tomorrow as they work to recover from

the devastating health and economic impacts of the pandemic. We believe that SB2169 will provide critical support to Hawai'i's food banks, which will allow us to provide nutritious food to those in need.

Mahalo Nui,



Wes Perreira

Director, Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

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

February 22, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference

Re: SB 2169, SD1, Relating to Food Assistance

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2169, SD1, which appropriate funds to enable Hawaii's food banks administering The Emergency Food Assistance Program to continue to meet the food security needs of the people of Hawaii during this time of unprecedented need due to the disturbances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS SB 2169, SD1.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is Hawai'i's largest integrated health system that provides care and coverage for approximately 265,000 members. Each day, more than 4,400 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group physicians and providers come to work at Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i to care for our members at our 20 medical facilities, including Moanalua Medical Center, providing high-quality care for our members and delivering on our commitment to improve the health of the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

We know that food insecurity increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The four Hawai'i food banks administering The Emergency Food Assistance Program served a critical role for many families facing food insecurities due to job loss and other reasons related to the pandemic and were able to meet the State's increased need for food during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic due to a major increase in federal funds and philanthropy. However, with consistent federal funds, via American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), ending these food banks will struggle to continue to meet the needs of our local residents who need this help.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports policies that ensure all Hawaii residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, Kaiser Permanente supports "whole-person care," including the provision of access to services and resources that address beneficiaries' physical health, mental health and social needs. Food security means that all people, at all times, have

physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle. To this end, in 2021 Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i invested \$300,000 in grants to improve food security to community-based organizations. These grants went on to support programs that increased food security for pregnant and postpartum mothers in low-income, underserved communities. Furthermore, Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i distributed nearly 450,000 pounds of food to furloughed and displaced hotel workers.

We support SB 2169, SD1 because it will provide necessary funding to enable Hawai‘i’s food banks administering The Emergency Food Assistance Program to continue to meet the food security needs of the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

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

FROM: Tiffany Pollister

SUBJECT: SB2169 SD1 - Relating to Food Assistance

Hearing: Tuesday, February 22, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

POSITION: I support the proposed bill, **SB2169**, Relating to Food Assistance

Aloha Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, and Honorable Members,

My name is Tiffany Pollister and I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am testing in favor of the Senate Bill 2169 SD1 relating to food assistance. Prior to the pandemic, Hawaii's families were already struggling to pay the bills and provide sufficient food on the table. Although things seem to be returning to a state of normalcy for Hawaii, this is not the case for many of Hawaii's families. The covid-19 pandemic's effects are still hindering some of our families financial growth and in some cases, made it even worse.. Currently, the houses listed for rent and for sale are the highest it's ever been in the history of Hawaii. The gas prices are also at a ridiculous rate, as well as every day essentials and groceries.

Additional measures are needed to ensure that our children are being fed and the people of Hawai'i are taken care of. By having more funds, we would be able to provide adequate food to our families which would result to good health and wellness of these individuals. By providing them with food, they will be able to focus better on their schooling and jobs without the stress of having to worry about when their next meal would be. Worrying about when your next meal would be should never be an issue.

Thank you, Tiffany Pollister

SB-2169-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2022 8:50:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Beth Tokioka	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha! As the President of the Kauai United Way Board of Directors and a member of the Kauai Advisory Board for the Hawaii Foodbank - Kauai Branch, I have seen first hand how quickly and effectively HFB has responded to acute needs in our community. The Kauai north shore flooding of 2018 was devastating for the affected communities. HFB quickly responded and provided prolonged and targeted assistance for the communities that were cut off due to extensive road damage. As we all know, in 2020 COVID hit and HFB-Kauai went into high gear (and continues in that mode today) to assist residents in need throughout the island. The essential nature of these services is as evident today as it has been for the past four years of crisis response. While community fundraising efforts will continue, they will be difficult to sustain at the current level of need. Additional funding will insure HFB can seamlessly provide food for those in need throughout the state. Mahalo for your consideration!