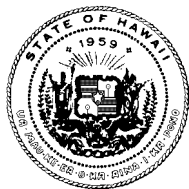


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



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

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 4, 2024

To: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2181 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

Hearing: February 6, 2024, Time 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill, requests clarification, and offers comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to establish a supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) recipient advisory committee. This committee would be placed within the DHS for administrative purposes only and shall be comprised of seven (7) appointees by the governor representing Oahu, Maui, Kauai, Molokai, and Lanai. Appointees shall be recipients of SNAP. Compensation would also be provided for time and expenses, including travel while attending meetings and in the discharge of their duties.

DHS agrees that improving program participation and increasing access to SNAP and other public benefits is critical.

The Department currently works to improve participation in SNAP and related public benefits through a variety of different mechanisms. For example, DHS contracts with seven community-based organizations to provide SNAP outreach statewide. SNAP outreach includes

education regarding eligibility requirements and providing individuals with assistance with applying for and maintaining benefits.

Additionally, DHS administers the Financial Assistance Advisory Council (FAAC) pursuant to section 346-14.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to render advice and information related to financial assistance benefits, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA). DHS notes there may be potential duplication between the efforts of FAAC and the proposed SNAP recipient advisory committee as both SNAP and financial assistance benefit programs share a common application form and application process, and there is overlap between recipients of SNAP and financial assistance benefits.

If this measure proceeds, DHS requests clarification as to whether members of the advisory committee are limited to current SNAP recipients or may include individuals who received SNAP previously. If the committee is limited to current recipients, DHS is concerned the compensation of \$40 per hour proposed in section 2 will be counted as income under section 17-676-38, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) and federal program rules and may result in a reduction of benefits or a recipient becoming over-income and ineligible for SNAP.

Finally, DHS respectfully requests that the effective date be after or later than December 31, 2024, to give DHS time to develop administrative processes to support the advisory council and the meeting format recommended for this bill. DHS will update the resources needed to implement this measure as the session progresses.

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



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

#### **Executive Officers**

**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway Hawaii, *Chair*  
**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Vice Chair*  
**Kit Okimoto**, Okimoto Corp., *Secretary/Treas.*  
**Lauren Zirbel**, HFIA, *Executive Director*  
**Paul Kosasa**, ABC Stores, *Advisor*  
**Derek Kurisu**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

---

TO: Committee on Human Services

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 6, 2024  
TIME: 9:30am  
PLACE: Room 329

RE: HB2181 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Position: Support

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

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, Members of the Committee,

HFIA is in support of this measure. In Hawaii one in eight people face food insecurity. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a vital tool in battling hunger in our state. It's important to understand that SNAP does not just benefit recipients. It brings guaranteed Federal funds into Hawaii's food systems. This helps stabilize our food industry for all residents.

Allowing SNAP users of to have a direct voice in improving the program will lead to better outcomes for the program. These stakeholders have valuable a valuable perspective and direct experience. They can help create actionable recommendations to make improvements for the system. Improving SNAP benefits everyone who utilizes Hawaii food systems.

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



## TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

FEBRUARY 6, 2024

### HB 2181, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

#### POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** HB 2181, relating to the supplemental nutrition assistance program. Pursuant to the “Economic Justice and Labor” section of the official Democratic Party of Hawai'i platform, the party “supports government investments of tax revenue in community development, government anti-poverty programs, and the transition to a sustainable, green economy.”

Many low-income households struggle to purchase food due to Hawai'i's high cost of living and food prices. The supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program, is crucial to providing necessary food assistance to some of our state's most economically disadvantaged residents.

Studies show that SNAP is the most effective anti-hunger initiative in the country. In Hawai'i, the program supports over 130,000 individuals, bringing more than \$630,000,000 into the State's economy each year.

Empowering SNAP recipients with greater feedback in the facilitation of the program would be useful in helping the Department of Human Services

to develop strategies to increase access to program benefits for underserved communities, improve program participation and renewal rates, and establish budgetary priorities that address the immediate concerns of food insecure populations.

Lived experience advisory boards for SNAP recipients have been established in other states, such as Oregon and Washington. They have also been created throughout the country for other issue areas, including restorative justice, sustainable agricultural development, combating systemic racism, and more.

Communities that are directly impacted by social programs are those whose voices we should uplift in determining how to strengthen such programs. They are, after all, the individuals with the most relevant experience in exposing the service delivery gaps that prevent the full potential of social benefit initiatives from being realized.

Mahalo nui loa,

**Kris Coffield**

*Co-Chair, Legislative Committee*  
(808) 679-7454  
kriscoffield@gmail.com

**Abby Simmons**

*Co-Chair, Legislative Committee*  
(808) 352-6818  
abbyalana808@gmail.com



**LATE**

**HB 2181**  
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
House Committee on Human Services

February 6, 2024

9:30 AM

Conference Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides testimony in **SUPPORT** HB 2181 which aims to establish a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipient Advisory Committee. **This critical legislation is of utmost importance to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Native Hawaiian community.**

As the principal public agency in the State responsible for the performance, development, and coordination of programs and activities relating to Native Hawaiians,<sup>1</sup> we recognize the critical importance of SNAP in addressing the nutritional needs of low-income households, particularly given the challenges posed by Hawai'i's high cost of living. OHA would like to emphasize that Native Hawaiian families experience the highest rates of household food insecurity compared to any other household in the United States.<sup>2</sup> This disparity further compounds Native Hawaiian health disparities such as diabetes and many other nutrition-related chronic diseases.<sup>3</sup>

The legislation rightly acknowledges that SNAP is a vital lifeline for economically disadvantaged residents, supporting over one hundred thirty thousand individuals and infusing more than \$630,000,000 into Hawai'i's economy annually. This program plays a pivotal role in mitigating hunger and ensuring basic nutritional needs are met without compromising the financial security of struggling families.<sup>4</sup>

By creating a SNAP Recipient Advisory Committee, HB2181 emphasizes that the knowledge and experience of program participants is vital to improved program delivery.

---

<sup>1</sup> Haw. Rev. Stat. §10-3(1) and (2).

<sup>2</sup> Long CR, Narcisse MR, Selig JP, Willis DE, Gannon M, Rowland B, English ES, McElfish PA. Prevalence and associations between food insecurity and overweight/obesity among native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander adolescents. *Public Health Nutr.* 2023 Jul;26(7):1338-1344. doi: 10.1017/S1368980023000769. Epub 2023 Apr 18. PMID: 37069046; PMCID: PMC10346012.

<sup>3</sup> Id.

<sup>4</sup> Id.



**HB2181**  
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
House Committee on Human Services

---

This innovative approach fosters collaboration between recipients and the Department of Human Services to enhance access and effectiveness.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs is pleased that our neighbor island communities will be on the advisory committee, ensuring voices from all of our diverse islands are heard. The inclusion of members from O‘ahu, Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaua‘i, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i is a commendable effort to capture the unique challenges faced by different communities. We also appreciate the way in which the advisory committee will be compensated for their expertise.

**OHA respectfully requests the committee consider language that would ensure the compensation will not be included in any calculation of SNAP or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits.** We have heard stories of families being denied for this important lifeline by less than \$100. OHA would like to ensure that this advisory committee can include current beneficiaries in a way that does not push them over the benefits cliff.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB1831 and urges the committee to **PASS** HB2181 and respectfully request consideration of the amendments provided. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



**LATE**

**LATE**

#### HIPHI Board

Misty Pacheco, DrPH  
Chair  
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD  
Secretary  
State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public Defender

Carissa Holley, MEd  
Treasurer  
Hale Makua Health Services

Keshia Adolpho, LCSW  
Na'au Healing Center

Debbie Erskine  
ARCH-MEPS Consulting LLC, Owner

Camonia Graham - Tutt, PhD  
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu

Jennifer José Lo, MD  
Hawai'i Health Partners

May Okihiro, MD, MS  
John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Department of Pediatrics

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP  
Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD  
Medical-Legal Partnership  
For Children in Hawai'i

Garret Sugai  
HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH  
John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Native Hawaiian Research Office

#### HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &  
Evaluation

Community Health  
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

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/Healthy Aging &  
Community Living

Public Health Workforce  
Development

Date: February 5, 2024

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

Re: HB 2181 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Hrg: Tuesday, February 6, 2024 9:30 AM

Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, convened by the Hawai'i Public Health Institute<sup>i</sup> appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **Support of HB2181**, which would establish a SNAP participant advisory committee.

#### All voices must be heard.

Creating a SNAP advisory board composed of SNAP participants ensures that the program will benefit from the vital insights of those whom it serves. Participants' firsthand experiences can directly inform improvements, making SNAP more responsive and effective. This participatory approach improves processes with diverse perspectives, strengthens community trust and program accountability. Empowering SNAP users to contribute to the decision-making process will lead to more effective solutions that reflect the needs of the broader SNAP community. Oregon has proven that this model can work and we can follow their lead.<sup>ii</sup>

#### People's time is important.

SNAP Participants bring invaluable lived experiences and expert knowledge to the table, and should be compensated in a way that reflects the significance of their contributions. These participants will take time out of their day to help improve the SNAP process and should be paid as a result. Providing fair wages acknowledges the value of their input and helps ensure a diverse and inclusive representative body by enabling participation from all different backgrounds.

Sincerely,

Nate Hix  
Social Impact Policy Manager  
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

<sup>i</sup> The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://oregonhunger.org/snap-client-advisory-board/>



**HB-2181**

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 9:47:09 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/6/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Zahava Zaidoff	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee members,

I stand in strong support of this bill and urge you to pass it.

As a lived experience expert, I want to partner with DHS to create and sustain the best program possible. Creating an advisory council made up of customers can only help the program run more efficiently and be better able to serve the people of Hawaii who rely on this resource.

By making this advisory council a paid position for us, you show your commitment to partnering with us as well as showing us that you value our contributions. We are not just your customers, we need to be your partners. Please let us do that.

Mahalo in advance for passing this measure.

Zahava Zaidoff

HD5

**HB-2181**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:03:42 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/6/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lea Minton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2181. Creating a committee to inform the Department of Human Services about their experiences and ideas of how to best reach others is imperative for collaborative design of an optimal program. The goal is to increase access to program benefits for underserved communities, improve program participation and renewal rates, and establish budgetary priorities that address the immediate concerns of food insecure populations.

**HB-2181**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:29:54 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/6/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hearing from the people who are affected by a program designed to help them will be invaluable to ensuring that it does just that.

The supplemental nutrition assistance program is the most effective anti-hunger initiative in the country. In Hawai'i, the program supports over 130,000 individuals, bringing more than \$630,000,000 into the State's economy each year. Empowering SNAP recipients with greater feedback in the facilitation of the program would be useful in helping the Department of Human Services design strategies to increase access to program benefits for underserved communities, improving program participation and renewal rates, and establishing budgetary priorities that address the immediate concerns of food insecure populations.

**HB-2181**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 12:28:22 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/6/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2181. Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-2181**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:33:33 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/6/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am in support in this bill. This will help with the procedures of SNAP eligibility

Mahalo nui loa

Leilani Kailawa

Send DataSend Data

Send DataSend Data

**LATE**

**HB-2181**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:14:28 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/6/2024 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

The supplemental nutrition assistance program is the most effective anti-hunger initiative in the country. In Hawai'i, the program supports over 130,000 individuals, bringing more than \$630,000,000 into the State's economy each year. Empowering SNAP recipients with greater feedback in the facilitation of the program would be useful in helping the Department of Human Services design strategies to increase access to program benefits for underserved communities, improving program participation and renewal rates, and establishing budgetary priorities that address the immediate concerns of food insecure populations.

**LATE**

**HB-2181**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:18:40 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/6/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Witeck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly urge that the Committee approves this measure SNAP provides assistance to over 130,000 individuals in Hawaii to help them secure beneficial and necessary food. This measure will increase access to SNAP and its services and benefits.

The program also brings in over \$630 million to the state's economy, another plus of the program. Improving participation in SNAP will aid currently underserved communities and provide more food security and opportunities for participants' feed-back.. Please vote to approve this measure.

**LATE**

**HB-2181**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 12:19:28 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/6/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The supplemental nutrition assistance program is the most effective anti-hunger initiative in the country. In Hawai'i, the program supports over 130,000 individuals, bringing more than \$630,000,000 into the State's economy each year. Empowering SNAP recipients with greater feedback in the facilitation of the program would be useful in helping the Department of Human Services design strategies to increase access to program benefits for underserved communities, improving program participation and renewal rates, and establishing budgetary priorities that address the immediate concerns of food insecure populations.