

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

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

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Thursday, March 28, 2024

9:50 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

**In Support**

**H.B. No. 2430, HD2, Relating to Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer  
for Children Program**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of the Governor supports H.B. No. 2430, HD2, Relating to Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program. This bill would establish the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (Summer EBT) Program in Hawaii. Hawaii has opted into the program beginning this summer, and this bill will help the Department of Human Services develop and implement this new program, including providing DHS with additional funding to meet the federal program's required 50/50 match for administrative funds of roughly \$2 million.

Passed into law by Congress and administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Summer EBT program will address food insecurities by providing families with financial support during the summer to buy food at grocery stores, farmers market or other authorized retailers, similar to how SNAP benefits are used. The Summer EBT program is intended to support children who lose access to free and reduced price meals through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program during the summer when school is not in session.

It was recently announced that beginning in the summer of 2024, Hawaii families will receive \$177 per eligible child through the Summer EBT program in order to provide more equitable resources for island communities compared to the benefit amount of \$120 per eligible children in the U.S. mainland.

According to the USDA, the Summer EBT program would provide nearly 100,000 Hawaii families with increased access to nutritious meals. This program is critical for these families, and helps to advance our Administration's work to address ongoing food insecurity issues in our State—especially through the expansion of local agriculture.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/28/2024

**Time:** 09:50 AM

**Location:** CR 211 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Ways and Means

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Bill Title:** HB 2430, HD2 RELATING TO SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM.

**Purpose of Bill:** Establishes the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

**Department's Position:**

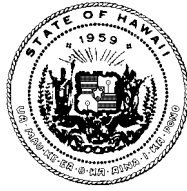
The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 2430, HD2 as it is a priority for the Governor but defers to the Department of Human Services (DHS) as to the implementation of this measure.

The Department stands prepared to support DHS as the lead to carry out the Summer Electronics Benefits Transfer (EBT) Program. The Department will provide the data it has the capacity to transmit per the parameters of the Summer EBT program.

The Department stands firm in its commitment to all of its nearly 160,000 students in providing supports to nurture the development of the whole child and doing what is best for our keiki across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

March 26, 2024

To: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2430 HD2 – RELATING TO SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM.**

Hearing: Thursday, March 28, 2024, 9:50 a.m.  
Conference Room 211, State Capitol & Video Conference

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) strongly supports this administration measure. The proposal establishes and clarifies the responsibilities of DHS and the Department of Education (DOE) to implement the State's Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (Summer EBT). Once implemented, the program aims to reduce hunger and food insecurity for children during summer breaks when they lose access to free and reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. DHS defers to DOE regarding its resource needs to implement the program.

**PURPOSE:** This bill establishes the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2).

The Committee on Human Services (HD1) amended the measure by:

- (1) Requiring the Department of Human Services to be in compliance, rather than exempt from, the State's procurement codes when contracting with providers;
- (2) Changing the appropriations to unspecified amounts;
- (3) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and

- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committee on Finance (HD2) further amended this measure by changing the numbers of full-time equivalent program specialist positions to unspecified numbers.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, P.L. 117-328, authorized a permanent, nationwide Summer EBT beginning in 2024. Summer EBT intends to reduce hunger and food insecurity for children who lose access to free and reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program during the summer when school is not in session. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics included in its September 2023 report that over the previous 12 months, food prices in Hawaii increased 5.3 percent.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress enacted a similar program, Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT), in response to the federal public health emergency that resulted in school closures that prevented students from receiving free and reduced-price meals at school. P-EBT proved to be effective in ensuring families of these students had the resources to address their children's food needs during the federal public health emergency. Through P-EBT, DHS issued \$18,256,166 in P-EBT benefits to 122,334 students just during the 2023 summer break.

For the Summer EBT program, the benefit of \$59 per summer month or \$177.00 for the entire summer period per child will be issued on a card and may be used at vendors that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This amount is significantly higher than other states participating in Summer EBT.

The benefits are 100% federally funded and will have an economic multiplier effect in the community, with values of up to \$2 of economic activity per dollar spent,<sup>1</sup> in addition to meeting students' food needs. For example, if 100,000 students each received the \$177.00 benefit, the \$17,700,000 in federal benefits paid would generate \$35,400,000 in economic activity for the State.

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Canning and Brian Stacy, The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier, Economic Research Report No. (ERR-265), July 18, 2019, <https://ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=93528>

Hawaii's participation in the new federal Summer EBT program requires a 50/50 match of state funds to federal funds for administrative costs. To develop and implement this new and permanent program, the Departments of Education and Human Services will need additional general funds to modify data systems and administrative processes and funds for one additional FTE program specialist position, with an appropriation request of \$50,000 A/\$50,000 N. DHS defers to DOE's human resource needs.

The balance of the Department's \$2,000,000 A/\$2,000,000 N funds request is a cost estimate based on the P-EBT implementation. DHS defers to DOE's administrative and IT resource needs.

For P-EBT, DHS conducted procurement pursuant to the presiding COVID-19 Pandemic emergency proclamations. The Summer EBT is like P-EBT, but there are additional program requirements. DHS requests similar procurement exemption from the competitive process for at least two years so that the Departments can quickly expedite the system modifications; additionally, we anticipate there may be program differences between FFY2024 and FFY2025. As the session continues, the amount requested may change as DHS is currently assessing how to implement the program this fiscal year and is looking for available SFY 2024 general funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



# HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Support for H.B. 2430 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 9:50AM

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Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support for **H.B. 2430**, which would appropriate funds and establish the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (Summer EBT) program for the state of Hawai'i.

When the school year ends, children from low income households lose access to the school meals they rely on, causing an alarming annual spike in childhood hunger. While existing summer meal programs play an important role, they reach only a fraction of the children who rely on free and reduced-price school meals during the school year. Summer EBT is a new federal program that bridges this gap, by providing cash benefits on an EBT card—similar to SNAP—for families to purchase food at retail locations.

According to the Food Research and Action Center, Hawai'i is home to approximately 100,000 children who are eligible to receive Summer EBT. ***Eligible families would receive \$177 per child for this summer—up to a total of \$17.7 million in federal dollars for the entire state.*** This is funding that would support local food businesses and retailers, while also providing significant relief to families who struggle to keep up with grocery bills while their children are not in school.

Summer EBT benefits are entirely federally funded. However, the program requires a 50 percent match in administrative costs, which HB 2430 would provide. Without this modest administrative investment, Hawai'i will lose out not only on the \$17.7 million in federal cash benefits, but also on the economic multiplier that EBT benefits provide. In fact, the USDA estimates that every dollar in EBT benefits can generate \$1.50 in local economic impact. This means that Summer EBT could generate over \$26 million in economic activity during the summer months.

HB 2430 is a small investment that will yield big results. It achieves this by ensuring Hawai'i has the necessary capacity to administer this important federal program, which would provide cash to struggling families during the summer months, and also by bringing in millions of federal dollars that will stimulate Hawai'i's food economy. We highly encourage you to pass this bill, for the good of Hawai'i's children, families, and local businesses. Thank you for your consideration.



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**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

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TO: Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 28, 2024  
TIME: 9:50am  
PLACE: Room 211

RE: HB2430 HD2 Relating to Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children

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 Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Members of the Committee,

HFIA is in strong support of HB2430, the "Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program." This legislation is vital for addressing the pressing issue of childhood hunger, particularly during the summer months when school meal programs are unavailable.

Childhood hunger remains a significant concern in our communities, and the implementation of the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program is a crucial step in combating this issue. This program not only provides families with additional federal funds to purchase nutritious food but also injects vital resources into our local economies, supporting grocers, farmers, and small businesses.

As highlighted in the testimony from the Department of Human Services (DHS), a similar program, the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT), proved to be effective during the COVID-19 pandemic in ensuring families had the resources to address their children's food needs. DHS issued \$18,256,166 in P-EBT benefits to 122,334 students during the 2023 summer break alone. For the Summer EBT program, each child could receive a benefit of \$177 per month, which is significantly higher than other states participating in Summer EBT. These benefits are 100% federally funded and will have an economic multiplier effect while meeting students' food needs.

It is important to note that while the Summer EBT program requires a state match of 50 percent of federal administrative funds, the appropriation request is only \$2,000,050. **Using the figures provided by DHS for 2023, the state stands to pull in \$18,256,166 in federal dollars to support hungry children and an additional \$2,000,050 for the administrative match, resulting in a 10 to 1 federal match.**

H.B. 2430 represents a modest yet impactful investment that will yield significant results. By supporting struggling families during the summer months and stimulating Hawaii's food economy with millions in federal dollars, this bill aligns with our shared goal of promoting the well-being of our community's children and families.

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





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**To: Committee on Ways and Means.**

**Re: HB2430 HD2 Relating to Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program.**

**Date: March 28, 2024**

**Time: 9:50 a.m.**

**Place: Conference Room 211**

**Position: Support**

Good afternoon, Chairperson Donovan M. Delacruz & Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki and members of the Committee on Ways and Means. I am Curtis Higashiyama Employee Relations and Government Affairs Manager, and we appreciate this opportunity to testify.

ABC Stores **Supports** measure HB2430 HD2. Establishes the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000 (HD2)

As the need for food security increases so is there a need for support to continue these programs that lessen food insecurity. This program will help children who lose access to free and reduced priced meals during the summer when school is not in session.

Accordingly, this measure is a 10 to 1 match in Federal funds, if Hawaii invests \$2 million to cover half the administrative costs the Federal government will put in the other \$2 million for administrative costs and up to \$18 million more to fund the program. This money will go directly into our local food systems to help food-insecure children.

This program not only provides families with additional federal funds to purchase nutritious food but also injects vital resources into our local economy, supporting grocers, farmers, and small businesses.

We **support** this measure and ask you to pass HB2430 HD2. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,  
Curtis Higashiyama  
ABC Stores  
Employee Relations and Government Affairs

To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President  
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Thursday, March 28, 2024, 9:50 a.m., Conference Room 211

RE: **HB2430 HD2 Relating to summer electronic benefits transfer for children program.**

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AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB2430 HD2**. This measure establishes the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program and appropriates funds.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 84,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 40 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole-person care and health equity includes addressing social determinants of health, including housing, language access and nutrition among other factors. We understand that without access to affordable, healthy food, the health and well-being of our communities is negatively impacted. According to the Hawai'i Foodbank, 1 in 4 keiki in Hawai'i may not know where they will get their next meal, and for more than 81,000 keiki, getting the energy they need to learn and grow can be a daily challenge. Proper nutrition is vital for keiki growth and development and may reduce the risk of health conditions like anemia, asthma, hyperactivity, and anxiety.<sup>1</sup> Given the significant proportion of federal funding available for this program, this is a cost-effective solution to support keiki health. For these reasons, AlohaCare supports this measure.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB2430 HD2**.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger>



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March 28, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2430, HD2**  
RELATING TO SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER FOR CHILDREN  
PROGRAM

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
9:50 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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 2430, HD2**, which establishes the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program.

The Hawai'i Department of Education's School Food Services Branch serves over 100,000 nutritionally balanced, affordable meals to Hawai'i's students on any given school day. However, when schools are closed, our keiki lose access to healthy meals and are at higher risk of food and nutrition insecurity. Experiencing food insecurity as a child can have long-term impacts on academic achievement as well as mental and physical health.

The Summer EBT for Children Program will help close the summer hunger gap when keiki are on summer break and not getting nutritious school meals. This program will offer nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income students, increasing their family's food purchasing power and improving their nutrition. It also provides economic benefits to farmers participating at grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other food retailers.

We believe that access to locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein to low-income individuals and families provides benefits to both Summer EBT students and Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Re: **HB 2430 HD2 – Relating to Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
March 28, 2024, 9:50 AM

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 2430 HD2**. This bill establishes the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for Children Program and makes appropriations.

In the 2022, only 7.6 percent of the low-income students who got free or reduced-price school lunch during the academic year also got free lunch at summer camps, summer schools, or other summer programs through the federal Summer Food Service Program.<sup>1</sup> While they weren't getting free or reduced-price meals during the summer, those low-income children and youth still needed to eat, stressing their families' budgets.

That's where Summer EBT comes in. This new federal program provides grocery-buying benefits to low-income families with school-aged children when schools are closed for the summer.<sup>2</sup> **For the summer of 2024, eligible Hawai'i families could receive \$177 per child in Summer EBT benefits,**<sup>3</sup> which goes a long way towards helping families afford to buy healthy food for their keiki.

According to the Department of Education, 55 percent of Hawai'i's 167,649 public school students are economically disadvantaged,<sup>4</sup> which means that approximately 92,000 keiki could qualify for Summer EBT. If there were all to receive those benefits, that would mean drawing down **more than \$16 million in federal dollars not only helping local families buy food, but also supporting our grocery stores and other food retailers across Hawai'i.**

However, Summer EBT requires that states match 50 percent of federal administrative funds for the program with non-federal funds.<sup>5</sup> This bill would establish the Summer EBT program in Hawai'i and provide the required matching funds. This seems like a good investment, as **each \$1 in state funds could leverage as much as \$8 in federal funds** for keiki and their family, as well as local supermarkets.

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

Thank you,

Nicole Woo  
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/summer-report-2023.pdf>

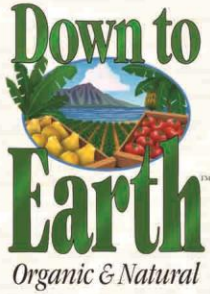
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt/2024-benefit-levels>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2024/testimony/Info\\_Testimony\\_WAM-EDU\\_01-16-24\\_EDN.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2024/testimony/Info_Testimony_WAM-EDU_01-16-24_EDN.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt/implementation-toolkit>

Love Life!



HB2430 HD2 RELATING TO SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER  
FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM

Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment

March 28, 2024, 9:50am State Capitol

Aloha Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Sen. Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and Committee Members.

**Down to Earth Organic and Natural testifies in support of HB2430 HD2.**

*Down to Earth Organic and Natural has six locations on Oahu and Maui. Since we opened in 1977, we have supported healthy lifestyles and preservation of the environment by selling local, fresh, organic and natural products, and by promoting a healthy, plant-based and vegetarian lifestyle.*

We are strongly in support of HB2430 HD2 to establish the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program. This bill aims to address critical issues surrounding food insecurity among children during the summer months, and its passage would have a profound impact on the well-being of our community's youth.

Implementing this program is not only morally imperative but also a strategic economic investment. By providing families with additional federal funds to purchase nutritious food, we directly inject millions of dollars into our local economies, supporting grocers, farmers, and businesses.

According to the Food Research and Action Center, approximately 100,000 children in Hawaii are eligible to receive Summer EBT benefits. Eligible families would receive \$177 per child for this summer, totaling up to \$17.7 million in federal funds for the entire state.

However, Summer EBT requires that states match 50 percent of federal administrative funds for the program with non-federal funds. This bill would establish the Summer EBT program in Hawaii and provide the required matching funds. This seems like a worthwhile investment, as each \$1 in state funds could leverage more than \$8 in federal funds for children and their families, as well as local stores.

HB2430 HD2 is a small investment that will yield significant results. By providing cash to struggling families during the summer months when they need it most and bringing in millions of federal dollars that will stimulate Hawaii's food economy, this bill aligns with our shared goal of supporting the well-being of our community's children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

Alison Riggs  
Public Policy & Government Relations Manager  
Down to Earth

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March 27, 2024

**Testimony of the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance**  
**Support for H.B. 2430, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**  
House Committee on Human Services  
Thursday, March 28th, 2024, at 9:50 AM

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the Committee:

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to offer our testimony in **strong support of H.B. 2430**, which seeks to allocate funds and establish the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (Summer EBT) program for the state of Hawai'i.

The Hawai'i Good Food Alliance (HGFA) stands firmly behind this initiative and believes it aligns perfectly with our mission to promote thriving community food systems across the islands. As a coalition of organizations dedicated to enhancing food production, distribution, and accessibility, we are deeply committed to ensuring that all residents of Hawai'i have access to nutritious, locally sourced food.

As the school year draws to a close, many children from low-income households face the harsh reality of losing access to the vital meals provided at school. This results in a concerning surge in childhood hunger during the summer months. While existing summer meal programs serve an essential purpose, they unfortunately reach only a fraction of the children who rely on free and reduced-price school meals throughout the academic year.

The Summer EBT program presents a promising solution to bridge this gap by providing families with cash benefits on an EBT card, akin to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This enables them to purchase food at retail locations, thereby ensuring that children have continued access to nourishing meals during the summer break.

H.B. 2430 represents a prudent investment with far-reaching benefits. By providing crucial financial assistance to families in need during the summer hiatus and by injecting millions of federal dollars into Hawai'i's food economy, this legislation has the potential to yield profound positive outcomes for our children, families, and local businesses alike. Thank you for your consideration.

*The Hawai'i Good Food Alliance is a diverse hui of individuals and organizations who share in the production, aggregation, and distribution of food, and share in the practice of mālama 'āina to re-build thriving community food systems. We join together—with a sense of urgency—to raise community voice and support one another in the belief that each and every person in Hawai'i can share in healthy, locally produced food.*





## HIPHI Board

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Native Hawaiian Research Office

## HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &  
Evaluation

Community Health  
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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: March 27, 2024

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB 2430 HD2 Relating to Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program

Hrg: Thursday, March 28, 2024 9:50 AM

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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 HB2430 HD1**, which would provide Hawai'i families with the opportunity to participate in the Summer EBT program.

This measure calls for the collaboration between the Department of Education, which directly provides for the students, and the Department of Human Services, which administers SNAP. It is vital the departments have a strong working relationship and work seamlessly together to provide meals to our youth. Success will be achieved through collaboration.

### School ends and hunger persists.

Students of low-income families are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals during the school year to help with the cost of food. However, these guaranteed meals are no longer available during the summer. This loss leaves many students facing food insecurity. Fortunately, the federal government is offering to provide families with hundreds of dollars per child so they can afford healthy meals, and Hawai'i has the opportunity to provide for its students. By participating in the Summer EBT program and facilitating local families' enrollment, Hawai'i can redirect millions of federal dollars toward groceries for these families and will help end the hunger that plagues 1 in 5 children in Hawai'i.<sup>ii</sup>

### Healthy meals mean healthy keiki.

Adopting the Summer EBT Program is a pivotal step towards enhancing our children's health. Ensuring access to nutritious food during summer, we combat food insecurity and its associated health risks, like stress, depression, and other chronic diseases.<sup>iii</sup> This promotes immediate health outcomes for our keiki and creates lifelong healthy eating habits. These students and our state will feel the benefits of this program long after the summer ends.


### **Economic boost to Hawai'i.**

Implementing this program is simply the right thing to do and a strategic economic investment. By providing families with additional federal funds to purchase nutritious food, we directly inject millions of dollars into our local economies, supporting grocers, farmers, and businesses. In total, Hawai'i families are eligible to receive up to \$18 million in funding for Summer EBT. Studies have shown that every dollar in SNAP benefits generates up to \$1.50 in economic activity.<sup>iv</sup> The effect would be similar in Hawai'i.

Mahalo to the committee for taking up such an important measure. It is imperative we work together to end childhood hunger throughout Hawai'i.

Please consider our testimony in support of HB2430 and passing this bill.

Sincerely,



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

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<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://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2021/child/hawaii>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/what-are-the-implications-of-food-insecurity-for-health-and-health-care/>

<sup>iv</sup> [https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err265\\_summary.pdf](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err265_summary.pdf)





March 27, 2024

**LATE**

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**American Heart Association Testimony for HB 2430 HD2  
“Relating to Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program”**

**Chairman of the Board**  
Brandt Farias

**President**  
Zia Khan, MD

**Board Members**  
Greg Christian  
Jason Fujita  
Michael Lui, MD  
Ben Morgan  
Matthew Reeves, D.O., MBA  
Ben Salazar  
Michael Tanoue, M.D.  
David Underriner

The American Heart Association is pleased to testify in **strong support** of HB 2430 HD2. This bill establishes and clarifies the responsibilities of the State Department of Human Services and the State Department of Education to implement the State’s Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (“Summer EBT Program”) and appropriates funds. This program provides access to free and reduced-price meals to children during their summer breaks when they lose access to free and reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

It is important to ensure children have access to nutritious meals year-round. Research shows that rates of food insecurity among children are higher in the summer—a time when children do not have access to National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, which are only available during the academic year.<sup>i</sup>

*Serving Hawaii since 1948*

**Our Mission:**  
“To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.”

Beginning this summer, eligible Hawaii families can receive \$177 per child through the Summer EBT program. The USDA has also indicated that this program would provide nearly 100,000 Hawaii families with increased access to nutritious meals.

For more information on the AHA’s educational or research programs, visit [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) or contact your nearest AHA office.

In addition to ensuring that eligible keiki are able to purchase nutritious food during the summer months, this program will also result in an injection of millions of dollars into Hawaii’s economy, thereby supporting local farmers and businesses.

The American Heart Association urges you to pass HB 2430 HD2 to help reduce food insecurity and childhood hunger in Hawaii.  
Sincerely,

Jamie Morgan  
Sr. Region Lead, State Government Relations

<sup>i</sup> Huang, J., Barnidge, E., & Kim, Y. Children receiving free or reduced-price school lunch have higher food insufficiency rates in summer. *Journal of Nutrition*. 2015; 145(9), 2161–2168.

Dear Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB2430, which requires Hawai'i participation in the federal Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Program and provides funding for staff to administer the program. As a concerned citizen and advocate for children's well-being, I believe that this program is crucial for addressing food insecurity among vulnerable families during the summer months.

During the school year, many low-income families rely on free or reduced-price school meals to ensure that their children have access to nutritious food. However, when schools close for the summer, these families often face increased financial strain as they struggle to provide adequate meals for their children. Studies have shown that food insecurity among children rises significantly during the summer months, leading to negative impacts on their health, development, and academic performance.

The Summer EBT Program has been proven to effectively combat summer hunger by providing eligible families with additional funds to purchase food during the summer break. By distributing benefits through electronic transfer, the program offers a convenient and dignified way for families to access nutritious food items, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Furthermore, the program stimulates local economies by boosting grocery sales in communities with high rates of poverty.

Implementing a Summer EBT Program in our state would demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that all children have access to the nutrition they need to thrive, regardless of their family's income level. By investing in the health and well-being of our youngest citizens, we can create a stronger, more equitable society for all.

I urge you to support HB2430 and advocate for its passage in the legislature. By doing so, you will make a meaningful difference in the lives of countless children and families across our state.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I look forward to your continued leadership and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Butel".

Jean Butel

**HB-2430-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 2:40:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2024 9:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lillian Coltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support our Keiki and ohana

**HB-2430-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 3:00:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2024 9:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patti Hatzistavrakis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Patti Hatzistavrakis, fully support 2430 HB RELATING TO SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM.

The Summer EBT program would be beneficial to our families and the greater Hawai'i economy. First of all, families who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals can receive up to \$177 per child in federal benefits to help purchase groceries during the summer. Secondly, up to \$18 million in federal funds could be brought into Hawai'i through this program per year, benefiting families in need and the overall economy. Lastly, HB2430 will require that Hawai'i participate in this federal program and provide funding for staff to administer it.

I strongly urge the Committee on Ways and Means to pass 2430 HB RELATING TO SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM so that our families can access the food they need over the summer months. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the bill and for your consideration.



March 28, 2024

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**RE: Testimony in support of HB 2430, Relating to Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program**

Dear Senator Dela Cruz, Senator Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, **I support HB 2430**, which would ensure that Hawai'i can participate in the federal summer electronic benefits transfer for children program. This federally funded program will provide up to \$177 per child in cash benefits while school is out for the summer to help ensure our keiki have enough to eat.

Food security is a critical issue in Hawai'i, where one in six residents lacks comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. Keiki hunger is even more severe, with an estimated one in four keiki in Hawai'i experiencing food insecurity—the second highest rate of childhood food insecurity in the country. For many children, school might be the only place where they can reliably receive a healthy meal; school breaks mean a loss of access to those primary meals. Through the USDA S-EBT program, Hawai'i families with keiki will receive up to \$177 per child over the summer, which will both ensure they have enough to eat through the school break as well as bring millions of federal dollars to our State to be spent in local stores.

HB 2430 would support the State infrastructure needed to ensure Hawai'i can participate in this important program, and we strongly support this measure.

Hawai'i Foodbank is Hawai'i's largest hunger relief organization, fiercely dedicated to our mission of nourishing our 'ohana today while working to end hunger tomorrow. We work with a network of 200 partner agencies across O'ahu and Kaua'i to provide food assistance to an average of more than 150,000 people each month. Last year, we distributed food for more than 16.2 million meals across the islands we directly serve, including 5 million pounds of fresh produce. Together with the Maui Food Bank, serving Maui County, and The Food Basket, serving Hawai'i Island, our network of food banks and partner agencies provide food assistance to all those facing hunger across the State.

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

Amy Miller  
President and CEO  
Hawai'i Foodbank



**Parents And  
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2430 HD2 RELATING TO SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM**

**TO:** Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, & Members,  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO

**DATE:** March 28, 2024 at 9:50 AM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 2430 HD2 Relating to the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program**, which appropriates funds to maximize participation in the federal summer electronic benefits transfer for children program. The measure leverages state funds to bring in federal funds that will go to the critical purpose of providing food to families during the months children are typically not in school.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our 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 building programs.

Through our programs, we are seeing the rise in food insecurity that our local families face. Even working families who have not previously needed help with food have started to request and accept it. We saw this increase start during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and increase through the rise of inflation and the 2023 Maui wildfire crisis. In response, we have increased direct food and financial assistance to program participants in the Kalihi and Maui communities. Additionally, we support survivors of domestic violence through the financial impact of keeping their families safe, which often includes leaving their abusive financial provider partner. Many of the survivors we serve struggle through houselessness and loss of income. Increased access to SNAP benefits would help these families achieve and/or maintain basic stability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.

**HB-2430-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 2:24:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2024 9:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Suzanne Fields	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Yet again, here is a tried and true way to help those in need with HB2340.

Do the right thing and SUPPORT this initiative!

1. Families who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals can receive up to \$177 per child in federal benefits to help purchase groceries during the summer.
2. HB2430 will require that Hawai'i participate in this federal program and provide funding for staff to administer it.
3. Up to \$18 million in federal funds could be brought into Hawai'i through this program per year, benefiting families in need and the overall economy.

**HB-2430-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 3:59:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2024 9:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debbie Watson-Correa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz,

I and in strong support of this measure.

With many children suffering from food insecurity, this bill would provide \$20 million to feed hungry children. Additionally this would benefit their parents knowing their children will be fed.

Our children are the future and with a small investment from the state, the federal funding would help us to provide benefits to our children in the summer.

I urge you to pass HB2430.

Thank you.



March 12, 2024

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

From: Carlos Baez  
Chief Merchandising Officer  
PPRM-Hawaii (Times Supermarkets, Don Quijote, Big Save Stores, Marukai Hawaii)

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HB2430

I am in strong support of bill HB2430 that appropriates funds to the State Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the implementation of Act 153, SLH 2019. This law authorizes DOA as the administering agency of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program (HHFIP), otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DA BUX benefits many aspects of the state's food system. By offering a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables for low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce, while also supporting the local economy, generating increased revenue for 59 participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations. Additionally, DA BUX is stretching the food budgets of low-income households and increasing their consumption of Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX is also providing critical support for Maui's economic recovery from the Maui wildfires. DA BUX has already proven it can increase sales and profits for Maui County farmers. Three Maui County food hubs report an average 114% increase in local produce sales to SNAP shoppers over the past two years. Statewide, a \$2 million State investment has the potential to generate \$12.8 million in economic activity.

A government-funded program that supports families on SNAP-EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is crucial for several reasons:

*Alleviating Hunger and Poverty: SNAP-EBT provides low-income families with the means to purchase food, reducing hunger and ensuring basic nutrition. This is particularly important for vulnerable populations, including children, elderly individuals, and individuals with disabilities, who may otherwise struggle to afford an adequate diet.*

*Improving Health Outcomes: Access to nutritious food through SNAP-EBT can lead to improved health outcomes. Adequate nutrition is essential for physical and cognitive development in children, and it can help prevent or manage chronic health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.*

*Economic Stimulus: SNAP benefits are spent quickly, injecting funds directly into local economies. When families use SNAP-EBT to purchase food, it supports grocery stores, farmers' markets, and food producers, thereby bolstering the agricultural and retail sectors. This, in turn, can create jobs and stimulate economic activity.*

*Social Stability: By reducing food insecurity and poverty, SNAP-EBT contributes to social stability. When families can afford basic necessities like food, they are better able to focus on other aspects of their lives, such as education, employment, and personal well-being. This stability can have positive ripple effects throughout communities.*

*Supporting Working Families: Many SNAP recipients are employed, but their wages may not be sufficient to cover all their expenses, including food. SNAP EBT helps fill this gap, enabling working families to make ends meet and providing a safety net during times of financial hardship, such as job loss or unexpected expenses.*

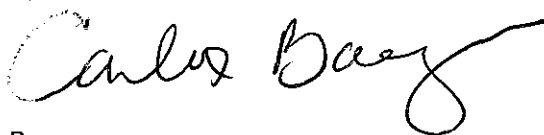
*Nutritional Education and Support: SNAP often includes educational components aimed at promoting healthy eating habits and budgeting skills. These resources can empower families to make healthier food choices, stretch their food dollars further, and improve their overall well-being.*

*Disaster Response and Resilience: In times of natural disasters, economic downturns, or other emergencies, SNAP-EBT can provide critical assistance to affected families. It helps ensure that individuals and communities can access food even when faced with unforeseen challenges.*

In essence, a government-funded program that supports families on SNAP-EBT is essential for addressing food insecurity, promoting public health, stimulating economic activity, and fostering social stability and resilience. It serves as a vital lifeline for millions of individuals and families across the United States, helping them meet their basic needs and build brighter futures.

Furthermore, a **\$2M per year recurring State investment will ensure the survival of the DA BUX program, which is currently set to expire on August 31, 2024.** State funding will be leveraged to request matching federal funds from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in the 2024 funding cycle. State funding has the potential to unlock these federal GusNIP dollars, as the GusNIP requires funding requests to include documentation of 100% non-federal match as well as a "sustainable funding plan." State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide a positive, lasting impact economically, for farmers, and for the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,



Carlos Baez

**HB-2430-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 12:06:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2024 9:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Axel Beers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members,

I am writing testimony to support HB2430 HD2. This bill will help to establish the summer EBT program in Hawaii. I understand the State is participating in this program for 2024 and SEBT benefits will be available for children, but that this bill will help the State with implementation.

The cost of living, quality of life, and food insecurity for residents should be of the utmost concern to legislators. This is a proposal to help move forward an initiative that helps children attain food security, which eases the cost of living for their families. SEBT, with DABUX, further maximizes this investment so that local farmers and our environment see benefits.

I urge legislators to look further into food assistance and other benefits that can increase quality of life, and decrease cost of living and food insecurity. Legislators can look into what is called the benefits cliff, and address the needs of those who are Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed (ie ALICE; ie, they do not make a household survival budget) yet do not qualify for SNAP/EBT. These families and individuals would also benefit from food vouchers and SEBT benefits, although they do not qualify.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Axel Beers

**HB-2430-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 7:39:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2024 9:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2430H2 that establishes the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program. Summer EBT will help feed keiki during the summer months when they need it most. Many keiki in our state go hungry or lack access to nutritious meals during the summer because they do not have access to free and reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program when school is not in session.

No one should go hungry. Especially our keiki. Appropriating the funds needed to support food insecure children should be a top priority. I urge you to pass this very important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2430-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 9:03:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2024 9:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kit Okimoto	Testifying for Okimoto Corp dba The Waianae Store, Nanakuli Super, & Friendly Market Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support