

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

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'ŌKELE

February 25, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: SB 960 SD1 - RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Hearing: February 27, 2025, Time 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

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

PURPOSE: This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rates, including establishing additional positions. Effective 7/1/2027. (SD1)

The Committee on Health and Human Services amended the measure by inserting an effective date of July 1, 2027, to allow the Department of Human Services to fill vacant existing positions in their SNAP processing centers.

DHS will discuss with the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) the implementation of differential pay increases as a strategy to fill vacancies and retain dedicated staff.

Presently, the Department has a workforce vacancy rate of approximately 25 percent for eligibility workers and 50 percent for clerical staff in our processing centers for SNAP and

cash assistance applications. High vacancies and challenges to both recruitment and retention of the workforce can be attributed to retirements, a lack of interested applicants, and opportunities for higher-wage jobs, which, combined, make the vacancies very difficult to fill. The Department is engaged in constant recruitment through a Wikiwiki Hire process, which includes weekly interviewing on Oahu.

The inability to sustain staffing negatively impacts overall processing and staff morale. There is a lack of staff to support the eligibility process through document processing, application registration, and other administrative functions integral to operations.

The Department would appreciate additional resources to strengthen the SNAP program, provided an appropriation does not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

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



SB960 SD1 SNAP Improve Rates

[COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS](#)

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Thursday, Feb 27, 2025: 10:30: Room 211 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB960 SD1:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) plays a crucial role in supporting individuals during their recovery process when dealing with mental health conditions and substance use disorders:

1. **Support During Recovery:** Individuals undergoing treatment for substance use disorders or mental health issues often need additional resources to stabilize their lives. SNAP provides essential support to ensure they can focus on recovery without worrying about food access.
2. **Improved Treatment Outcomes:** Studies show that food insecurity is linked to worse outcomes for people with mental health conditions. SNAP may help improve adherence to treatment plans, better medication efficacy, and greater engagement in therapy.
3. **Indirect Community Support:** SNAP also supports caregivers and families of individuals with behavioral health illnesses. When families can access healthy meals, it creates a more stable and supportive environment for everyone.
4. **Reduced Financial Stress:** Many people with behavioral health illnesses face financial instability due to employment challenges or medical costs. SNAP helps reduce food insecurity, alleviating one major source of stress, which can exacerbate mental health symptoms.

By improving nutrition, reducing food insecurity and providing critical support, SNAP benefits act as a foundation for better health and recovery for those managing behavioral health challenges.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:36:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. Mahalo

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:08:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott R Ziehm	Testifying for Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This written testimony is in support of SB 960 to prevent families from struggling to afford groceries. Unfortunately, one in three families in Hawai'i are food insecure. Federal SNAP benefits abruptly end once a family's income reaches 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), although a family needs to make 300% of the FPL just to make ends meet. Expanding benefits to 300% of the FPL will allow families to have a gradual decline in benefits as their income rises, allowing families to earn their way out of poverty rather than being stuck in a no-win situation where they lose thousands in benefits just by earning \$1 over the income limit. Please pass this bill as a solution to end family hunger.

Scott R Ziehm, DNP, RN, NEA-BC



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 27, 2025
10:30 a. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 211 and via videoconference

Re: SB 960 SD 1 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

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

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports SB 960 SD 1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rates, including establishing additional positions.

Inadequate SNAP staffing is a barrier to qualifying low-income families applying for SNAP in order to supplement their grocery budget so they can afford the nutritious food essential to health and well-being. An appropriation to establish additional positions will overcome this barrier.

We urge you to support SB 960 SD 1, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email garysimon@hawaii.rr.com

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Re: **SB 960 SD1 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 27, 2025, 10:30 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 SB 960 SD1**. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rates, including establishing additional positions.

This bill aims to improve SNAP participation rates by establishing additional positions at DHS and implementing measures to strengthen access to this vital program. SNAP serves as a crucial safety net for low-income individuals and families across the state, assisting them in purchasing nutritious food.

In Hawai'i, SNAP plays a critical role in supporting many of our most vulnerable residents. In fact, more than half of SNAP recipients in Hawai'i are in families with children, and SNAP lifted 62,000 people above the poverty line in Hawai'i, including 26,000 children, per year between 2015 and 2019, on average.¹

The average SNAP benefit per household with children in Hawai'i was \$1,098 per month in fiscal year 2022. In 2024, Hawai'i received \$732.5 million in SNAP benefits, not only lifting up low-income families, but also directly supporting approximately 900 food retailers in Hawai'i.

There is a lot of room to enhance SNAP's reach. From 2017 to 2019, only 62% of eligible Hawai'i residents participated in SNAP,² indicating that there are tens of thousands people in Hawai'i who need the support of SNAP but are not getting it.

The additional positions and other improvements proposed by this bill would not only reduce food insecurity in our state, but also stimulate the local economy with millions more dollars going to local food retailers. In addition, the bill would improve DHS's administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

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

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_Hawai'i.pdf

² <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/snap-eligibility-access.html>



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Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

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 25, 2025

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

RE: Support for SB 960 Relating To The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Hrg: Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10:30 AM, Conference Room 211

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) coalition is in **support with amendments of SB 960**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rates, including establishing additional positions.

Please amend this bill for it to go into effect in 2025, not 2027.

One in three households in Hawai'i face food insecurity.³ Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are a lifeline to many of these residents. Local families in need receive over \$600 million annually in SNAP benefits.⁴ Unfortunately, the state has made accessing these benefits incredibly difficult. The state needs to improve the enrollment process and ensure local SNAP-eligible residents can receive the federal benefits they need.

One Additional Worker Could Provide \$2 Million in Federal Benefits

Our SNAP office enrolls over 60,000 households annually, with less than 300 staff. That is more than 200 applications per staff member. Given the extreme backlog, adding one extra person to our SNAP department could be the difference between 200 families receiving SNAP benefits or not. At an average benefit per household of over \$9,600 annually, this worker could help provide these 200 families in need with \$2 million in total federal food assistance.

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² 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.

³ The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i - Hawai'i Food Bank.

https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/HawaiiFoodbank_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii_2023.pdf

⁴ Hawai'i Department of Human Services.

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SFY-2024-SUMMARY-apr.pdf>

Difficulty Enrolling

Local Hawai'i residents face immense barriers when trying to enroll in SNAP. Wait times often exceed four hours, causing many applicants to abandon the process out of frustration.⁵ Physical office locations are frequently inaccessible, further compounding the issue. When residents call the Department of Human Services (DHS) at their scheduled time for the required interview, their calls often go unanswered, leaving them unable to complete the process. Days or weeks later, they receive a callback from an unrecognized number at an unscheduled time, making it difficult for many applicants to answer—especially if they are at work or attending to other responsibilities. As a result, their missed interview leads to a denial of their application, creating an unfair cycle that denies residents the support they need.

Currently, only 62% of eligible residents participate in the program, with participation among kūpuna even lower at just 35%.⁶ Systemic challenges, including incorrect application denials and missed interview opportunities, leave many families without the critical support they need.

SNAP Office is Understaffed Following Increased Demand

In fiscal year 2023-2024, the SNAP department processed 90,000 applications—a 50% increase from 60,000 in 2017-2018.⁷ Despite this dramatic rise in demand, staffing levels have remained stagnant at around 275 employees for several years. This lack of sufficient staffing has made the enrollment process so difficult. To adequately support residents, the state must increase staffing to match the escalating demand.

With demand already on the rise, fifty thousand additional households have become eligible for SNAP this month as the net income threshold was removed from the eligibility test.⁹ The need for more staff is urgent now—and will become even more critical as more families apply.

We must increase both the number of budgeted positions and the pay for these roles to ensure they are filled. Raising salaries will help attract and retain qualified staff, while expanding available positions across the board will allow for targeted recruitment in areas with low vacancy rates, ensuring equitable access to services statewide.

During the height of the pandemic our state sprung into action to improve the unemployment office staffing situation. With over 100,000 eligible individuals currently missing out on SNAP benefits, we must take bold, urgent action to streamline the application process and ensure that every qualified person can access the support they need.

⁵ KHON

<https://www.khon2.com/local-news/changes-in-procedure-short-staffing-causing-long-lines-at-state-benefits-offices/>

⁶ Census - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Eligibility & Access.

<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/snap-eligibility-access.html>

⁷ Department of Human Services Budget 2025-2027.

<https://budget.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/21-Department-of-Human-Services-FB25-27-PFP.7Lt.pdf>

⁸ Department of Human Services Budget 2019-2020.

<https://budget.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/20-Department-of-Human-Services-FB19-21-PFP.ef3.pdf>

⁹ UHERO - Hawai'i's Unnecessary Benefit Cliff.

<https://uhero.hawaii.edu/hawai%ca%bbis-unnecessary-benefit-cliff-how-one-small-policy-change-could-deliver-in-45m-per-year-in-federally-funded-snap-benefits/>



10:1 Return on Investment

Our low SNAP participation rate means far fewer Hawai'i residents are accessing critical federal benefits than they should. Since half of SNAP processing staff salaries are covered by federal funds, increasing staffing levels would require the state to contribute only half the investment.¹⁰

Adding an additional \$10 million for staff on top of the roughly \$20 million we spend now would bring in an additional \$10 million in funding from the federal government for those staff. If that can help raise the SNAP participation rate from 62% to just 75%, we could bring in over \$100 million in additional federal funding annually. A \$10 million investment now would give more than a 10:1 return on investment, with more than \$100 million coming back to the state.

By failing to hire enough staff to ensure a smooth and efficient application process, we are effectively leaving federal dollars on the table and missing an opportunity to better support our community.

Variable Vacancy Rates

Many staff locations face high vacancy rates, making it challenging to fill positions. However, some sites have lower-than-average vacancies, presenting an opportunity to quickly expand the workforce. By adding positions to these locations, we could bring in dozens of new employees to strengthen the department.

Please pass this bill to ensure that federal SNAP benefits remain a reliable and accessible lifeline for all eligible residents in need.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nate Hix'.

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

¹⁰ SNAP State Activity Report 2021.

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-state-activity-report-fy21.pdf>



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for S.B. 960 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10:30AM

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **S.B. 960**, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rates, including increasing positions and pay.

Serving more than 160,000 residents, SNAP is one of the most critical public benefit programs in the nation.¹ It is an economic lifeline for these families, yet many who are eligible still struggle to obtain or maintain benefits due to bottlenecks at the state level. In recent weeks, SNAP applicants have been facing wait times of 3 to 4 hours to complete the required eligibility interview, and in some cases are unable to get through at all. Many have reported having to submit their paperwork more than once because it was lost. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents end up enrolled in SNAP—only 35% of our kūpuna population.²

DHS is aware of the issues, and working overtime to fill vacancies, streamline procedures, and alleviate the bottlenecks. Eligibility and clerical workers are doing their best despite being overwhelmed and underpaid, but the situation may worsen before it improves. Because of the recent rule change to eliminate net income limits for eligibility, there is expected to be an extra 14,000 households eligible for SNAP benefits later this year.³ With large increases in SNAP applications upcoming, it is more urgent than ever to fund this first step towards administrative efficiency.

The SNAP office put in budget requests for performance-based incentives for eligibility workers and contracting clerical staff, but both did not make it into this year’s budget. By implementing higher pay for staff, there is more incentive to fill current vacancies and lower turnover rates, ultimately increasing internal capacity.

Thank you for considering these comments in your deliberation of S.B. 960. The high volume of applicants are all struggling Hawai‘i residents who need a system that works for them, not against them, and these administrative fixes are a step in the right direction.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP Data Tables: National and/or State Level Monthly and/or Annual Data,” 2024. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

² American Community Survey, “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Eligibility & Access,” U.S. Census Bureau, October 18, 2024. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/snap-eligibility-access.html>

³ D. Moore & N. Hix, “Hawai‘i’s Unnecessary Benefit Cliff: How One Small Policy Change Could Deliver Tens of Millions in Federally-Funded SNAP Benefits,” University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization (UHERO), <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/hawai%CA%BBis-unnecessary-benefit-cliff-how-one-small-policy-change-could-deliver-in-45m-per-year-in-federally-funded-snap-benefits/#:~:text=UHERO's%20analysis%20suggests%20that%20eliminating,course%20of%20that%20same%20year.>



Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: SB960 SD1

February 27th, 2025 at 10:30am; Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee,

HAPA is testifying in support of SB960 SD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rates, including establishing additional positions.

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Mahalo for your consideration.

Please support SB960 SD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director



2025 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for
Progressive Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kaua'i
Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Department of
Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

February 27, 2025, at 10:30AM

RE: SUPPORT for SB 960, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express support for **SB 960**. This bill would appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rates, increasing positions and pay.

Serving over 160,000 Hawai'i residents, SNAP is a vital lifeline for struggling families. However, as many of our network members can attest, bottlenecks at the state level have made the application process extremely difficult, preventing families from receiving benefits. Struggling households have experienced wait times of 3 to 4 hours, and some have not been able to make it through the process at all.

It is essential to support DHS with adequate funding to address the current staff shortages, as they directly impact our residents ability to put food on the table for themselves and their families. By implementing higher pay for staff, there is more incentive and opportunity to streamline efficiency and alleviate the worsening barriers to this essential public program.

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of **SB 960**. This will greatly impact our SNAP-eligible communities who have gone long enough without benefits.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 27, 2025; 10:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 0960, SENATE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Aquino, 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. 0961, Senate Draft 1, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

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

This measure, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026, and the same amount for fiscal year 2026-2027 to strengthen access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by:

- (1) Authorizing differential pay increases;
- (2) Establishing new positions; and
- (3) Undertaking other programs or initiatives deemed effective in proving SNAP.

This bill would take effect on July 1, 2027.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 0960, Senate Draft 1
Thursday, February 27, 2025; 10:30 a.m.
Page 2

SNAP, formally known as the "Food Stamps Program", is the largest federal food assistance program that is currently in operation. It provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people. SNAP provided assistance to approximately 40 million persons in 2018, at an expenditure of \$57.1 billion. Approximately 9.2% of American households received SNAP benefits at some point during 2017, with approximately 16.7 of all children living in households receiving SNAP benefits.

Founded during the height of the Great Depression, SNAP is the cornerstone of our national social safety net. It is intended to prevent mass starvation precipitated from unemployment and homelessness. The program was also seen as a way of helping the poor while boosting the economy and ensuring that America's farmers would obtain a fair price for their labors by allowing government to purchase and distribute excess goods in time of crisis.

The COVID-19 Pandemic demonstrated how food scarcity and poverty threatened the health and welfare of our citizens in times of dire crisis. With so many people unemployed, entire families struggled to put food on the table on a consistent basis. Lines at the food bank and food drives stretched for miles and people waited for hours to receive surplus food.

While COVID-19 no longer poses the threat it did in years past, Hawaii's citizens still struggle because of stagnant wages and the rising cost of housing, food and other essentials. The lines for surplus food are still long as citizens continue to be challenged in putting food on their tables.

The HPCA has strongly endorsed this Program in previous years and we continue to urge your support. Additional SNAP benefits for a recipient can mean the difference between having to decide whether someone's last amount of cash will go for food or rent or medications or other necessities.

For these reasons, the HPCA respectfully urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

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@hawaiipca.net.



To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: February 27, 2025 10:30AM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB960 SD1

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

Members of AAUW of Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB960 SD1 which would appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services to increase the number of SNAP staff positions and their pay.

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applicants. These challenges result in only 62% of the eligible population, including only 35% of our kupuna population, successfully enrolled in SNAP. Please pass this measure to help the struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

Sincerely,
Younghee Overly
AAUW of Hawai'i Public Policy Committee

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawai'i is an all-volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaula'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward O'ahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy. Our goal is economic security for women in Hawai'i .



Protect Democracy Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org

info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: February 27, 2025 10:30AM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB960 SD1

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

Members of Indivisible Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB960 SD1 which would appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services to increase the number of SNAP staff positions and their pay.

SNAP applicants often face long waits to reach a SNAP staff, causing many to abandon the application process. These challenges result in only 62% of the eligible population successfully enrolled in SNAP. Please pass this measure to help the struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. No one should go hungry because they couldn't apply for the SNAP benefits.

Sincerely,
Indivisible Hawai'i Working Families Team

We're a grassroots movement of thousands of local Indivisible groups with a mission to elect progressive leaders, rebuild our democracy, and defeat the Trump agenda. In Hawai'i, we have ten groups across four islands, representing over a thousand pro-democracy citizens.



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info@hawaiiifood.com

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Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 27, 2025
TIME: 10:30am

RE: SB960 SD1 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.

HFIA supports this measure. Food insecurity has reached alarming rates in our state in recent years. Current data suggests up to 30% of families in the State face food insecurity and that in some areas that number could be as high as 40%.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a vital resource to help families in need in Hawaii. It also benefits all Hawaii consumers by bringing much needed Federal funds into our food systems and acting as a stabilizing force in the food industry at large.

Ensuring that everyone who needs food assistance has access to SNAP should be a top priority for our state Government.

Increasing staffing for the Department of Human Services SNAP program will enable more Hawaii residents who are eligible to access this vital assistance. This is beneficial not only for the individuals and families who will receive SNAP, but also for their communities and our State as a whole as food insecurity rates can be reduced and vital Federal funds will be brought into our food systems.



P.O. Box 392, Kilauea, Kauai, HI, 96754

PHONE: (808) 212-4765 • FAX: (808) 828-2027 • E-MAIL: bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com • WEB SITE: www.getfitkauai.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Thursday, February 27, 2025 - 10:30 AM

Get Fit Kauai Supports SB 960

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Agaran, and respected committee members,

My name is Bev Brody and I am the Director of Get Fit Kauai, the Health Eating Active Living Coalition of Kauai County.

I am writing to address a critical issue affecting the success of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in our state. Many SNAP applicants face extensive wait times—often 4 hours or more—just to reach a representative, which leads to a significant number of people abandoning the application process altogether.

As a result, only 62% of the eligible population successfully enrolls in SNAP, and even more concerning, only 35% of our kūpuna population is able to access this vital resource. These challenges stem in large part from an understaffed SNAP department, which is unable to keep pace with the high volume of applicants.

One effective way to address this issue is by increasing the pay for SNAP workers. This would not only help fill existing vacancies but also improve the overall effectiveness of the program. In addition, increasing the number of SNAP staff positions within the Department of Human Services will help meet the growing demand for support, ensuring more people are able to access the assistance they need.

Improving enrollment rates is crucial—raising the current enrollment rate from 62% to 75% could bring over \$100 million in additional support to families in need across our state. This increase would have a transformative impact, helping to lift many families out of poverty and providing them with essential resources.

I urge you to make this bill effective this year, not in 2027. Our people need help now, and delaying action would prolong the hardship that too many individuals and families are facing.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to your support in ensuring that our communities receive the assistance they urgently need.

Sincerely,

B.Brody

Bev Brody

Get Fit Kauai – Director

H.E.A.L. (Healthy Eating Active Living)

Community Coalition of Kauai County



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 960 SD1: RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii
Hearing: **Thursday, 2/27/25; 10:30 AM**; Videoconference and Room 211

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

Catholic Charities Hawaii **Supports SB 960 SD1**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rates.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, community-based organization that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 77 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, veterans, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy to the most vulnerable of the people in Hawaii. We serve over 40,000 people each year throughout the state. This bill is one of our economic justice priorities.

Food. A basic human necessity. Kids need it to grow strong and healthy. Parents need it to work hard and be productive. Kupuna need it to continue living actively in our community. SNAP is a godsend for those who qualify. However, the effectiveness of this program currently is hampered by understaffing at this DHS service. Furthermore, Governor Green has announced that the State will remove the net income eligibility criteria which would open up the SNAP services to approximately 13,000 to 14,000 new households! This could result in \$45,000,000 in benefits to our local families across the state.

This expansion of SNAP to many workforce families who are struggling with the lack of food is greatly needed. However, applying for SNAP benefits will be very frustrating under the current system. We strongly support funding to enable DHS to implement differential pay increases as a strategy to fill vacancies and retain experienced staff and to make other needed improvements.

Take action now! Funding to strengthen the SNAP program will help our ALICE workforce and their children with food benefits. Please help kupuna and others struggling with food insecurity. This initiative will help local people to remain in Hawaii, and give hope for a better and healthier life for children, adults, kupuna, etc.

We urge your support for this bill. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.



SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:44:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Testifying for Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-chair Moriwaki, and Members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, I am Co-chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i. We would like to offer our Strong support for SB960 SD1. We need to fund the Department of human services to provide more employees for the SNAP program , as well as increase their pay. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state.

The Green Party of Hawai'i asks that you please support SB960 SD1.

Sincerely,

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauiilo

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:22:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Testifying for Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii strongly supports SB9660 SD1

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:53:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support funding to increase staff and pay.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:14:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB960.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:20:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. More families every day need food stamps to keep their keiki healthy. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:35:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Claudia Wright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and Kaunas receive the SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:56:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill.

Kanani Kai

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:44:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda L Jenks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:00:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Berreman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. I speak from experience as a pediatrician and public health physician.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:03:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JANE TOLLEFSRUD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits!! SNAP is essential! The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:05:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DeWaine Tollefsrud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:18:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 10:35:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah G. Nehmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 10:50:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. SNAP benefits are a lifeline for people who cannot meet their basic nutritional needs through paid work and other program. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 10:52:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Babcock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:03:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gail Morrison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:14:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
martha chantiny	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please fund additional positions to help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:26:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Marsh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:36:19 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:37:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gaye Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. This bill aims to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services to improve SNAP's services. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:55:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janian K Thurman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 12:51:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorothy Zipp Malinski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please increase the budget for SNAP. Those folks are understaffed and more and more deserving people need to be assisted.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 1:49:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Bonk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 1:54:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Hee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please SUPPORT SB960

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

Sincerely,
Marsha Hee, resident of Hawaii Island

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:02:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikki Preston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:15:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:31:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have transgender people in Hawaii in every walk of life. They are our children, our neighbors, our friends and co-employees. Stand up and protect them please!"

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:42:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
gabrielle davidson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 3:05:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheryl Summers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 3:21:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:09:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and Kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:55:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill recognizes that the SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits by passing the bill. Mahalo.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:39:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Haunani Iao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:33:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 8:06:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Gately	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:43:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Hall Morin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please provide adequate funding for the SNAP program to help those who need this critical support.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:54:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyla Stueber	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:02:38 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill in support of those in our community who need this program

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:44:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gilbert Mendelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feed all of our children. How hard is that. SNAP is efficient and cost effective. Provide the resources and support to ensure every child and their family has food.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:04:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Vorm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No family should struggle to afford groceries, yet one in three families in Hawai‘i are food insecure. Federal SNAP benefits abruptly end once a family’s income reaches 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), although a family needs to make 300% of the FPL just to make ends meet. Expanding benefits to 300% of the FPL will allow families to have a gradual decline in benefits as their income rises, allowing families to earn their way out of poverty rather than being stuck in a no-win situation where they lose thousands in benefits just by earning \$1 over the income limit. Please pass this bill to help our families in need.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 12:43:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Nineth Ovando	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Due to the high cost of living more and more people will be on SNAP especially with the Trump's administration tariffs and tax cuts. At a minimum, as a blue state we need to be protecting our people as much as possible. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 1:08:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Dean	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill so SNAP recipients are served by an efficient system and do not experience unnecessary and harmful delays and obstacles. I am a community college instructor who works with students whose families rely on these benefits. When it is hard to access benefits, it creates a lot instability and disruption. Recipients like my students and their families are working hard to juggle everything; our state's systems should be well-funded and streamlined to remove chaos and barriers so people can more forward toward their educational, professional, and financial goals.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 1:48:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB960 because the SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please support this Bill and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

- SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to reach a representative, causing many to abandon the application process.
- These application challenges result in only 62% of the eligible population successfully enrolling in SNAP, including only 35% of our kūpuna population.

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Mahalo for your consideration.

Please support SB 690 and help serve and provide relief to our families and kupuna who are food insecure.

Committee on Ways and Means
Decision Making Hearing
Thurs., Feb. 27 at 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

RE: SB960, SD1 - RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Testimony IN SUPPORT

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

My name is Christine Andrews and I am submitting this testimony today from Wailuku, Maui in support of SB960, SD1. I must state first that, in reviewing the prior testimony from the Department of Human Services on this matter, I find it completely shameful and unacceptable that they report an astonishing vacancy rate of 25% for SNAP Eligibility Workers and of 50% for Clerical Staff. What are they and the Department of Human Resources doing wrong that the proponents of this bill felt that the only way to address the lack of responsiveness to SNAP applicants was to turn to the Legislature for help to remedy the situation? If people cannot be hired and retained to serve the most vulnerable members of our community, the job descriptions and salaries must be improved, which is why SB960, SD1 is before you. I spent years working in workforce development and I am embarrassed for the Department of Human Services that it has to make such excuses in their testimony. The Department has to do more than throw up its hands in despair. Actively recruit for these workers rather than rely upon the Hawaii employment website. Recruiters can go to the high schools and University of Hawaii campuses near SNAP benefit offices and post job openings, go on social media, have their SNAP benefit telephone hold message and website and SNAP benefit offices share job openings. If they cannot recruit and retain employees, adjustments must be made to the job description, requirements, salaries and benefits. Please, Committee Members, exhort them to do so.

It is shocking, tragic, and unacceptable that SNAP applicants often face four hours-long waits to speak with a representative, and that many give up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state.

I humbly request the Committee to pass SB960, SD1 as a mechanism to address this shameful situation.

Mahalo,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:45:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rene Robertson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:12:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Burns	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of Bill# SB961. No family should struggle to afford groceries, yet one in three families in Hawai‘i are food insecure. Federal SNAP benefits abruptly end once a family’s income reaches 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), although a family needs to make 300% of the FPL just to make ends meet. Expanding benefits to 300% of the FPL will allow families to have a gradual decline in benefits as their income rises, allowing families to earn their way out of poverty rather than being stuck in a no-win situation where they lose thousands in benefits just by earning \$1 over the income limit. Please pass this bill to help our families in need and keep our communities healthy and safe.

Sarah Burns

1025 21st Ave

Honolulu HI 96816

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:02:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

Please support and pass SB960.

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jordan Smith

Honolulu, 96813

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:32:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Kay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:13:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabelle Renfield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. There is also an additional aspect of raising the limit that people can get SNAP assistance which keeps some people from looking for better paying jobs simply because they would end up losing more money due too losing the funding that SNAP provides. Food sourcing is a bare minimum to effectively live in our society and truly should be a human right.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:14:23 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raphael Moller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP Department is extremely understaffed and unable to handle such a high volume of applications. Please, please, please, help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:54:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shana Laririt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. It is more important than ever that our community has support accessing nutrition.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:59:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Teare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need more staff working to register and maintain SNAP benefits for our Ohana. The dept is understaffed now and the need will be greater moving forward after all the new program cuts coming on.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 12:33:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Humphrey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Respected Members of the Committee,

SNAP is a lifeline for so many members of our community, this bill could truly improve their lives. I would greatly appreciate your support in increasing the number of positions of those evaluating SNAP applications, so that vulnerable members of our community are able to receive such necessary benefits.

Much respect and appreciation,

Amy Humphrey, Psy.D.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:09:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All,

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

Mahalo for all you do,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:28:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for allowing me to express my support for SB960 by Senator San Buenaventura which will increase the ability of DHS to improve service to SNAP households. With the cruel measures directed towards low income people on the federal level, it's important that the state of Hawaii bridge the gap and prevent its people from going hungry.

Mahalo,

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI 96749

Big Island

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:52:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lana Bilbo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP is a critical program in our state where the cost of living has become completely unmanageable. We have been dealing with an enormous amount of outmigration of our generational residents, predating and accelerating since COVID. We need systemic changes to improve the cost of living, but supporting SNAP is a critical measure to keep people here until we can make these changes.

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:02:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee.

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:30:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tia pearson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This provides funds to DHS to increase SNAP staffing and pay levels. Having enough personnel to take care of the increase in need can insure people won't have to wait so long to get their benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:34:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in support of SB960 SD1. Extending the effectiveness of DHS programs is necessary when government workers are unable to communicate effectively and senior income is usually constant every year. Recently on a scheduled phone interview, I waited an hour only to be cut off by the computer who knew I had called. Changes need to be made, people need to start answering the phones so that answers can be provided. Multiple approvals should not be sent out, or multiple denials that I did not make the telephone interview.

Also, the people taking the applications, should take complete information and not send forms to old addresses when I tried to provide them with correct info. Then call or text constantly bothering a person. When you explain your anger, they text back to say can you say Yes or No! Younger generations need to learn how to communicate better instead of depending on a computer to tell them what to do. As a former state worker I have seen so many bad habits of state civil servants, who don't understand that they're pay is based on serving the public, not for them to get their finances paid to do nothing! Mahalo for listening to the complaints of someone who has experienced waiting an hour, then being hung up on by a computer or perhaps by people who just refuse to pickup the phone!

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:44:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hilary Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The cost of food in Hawaii is outrageous. We need well-paid, well-trained professionals to administer the SNAP program for the benefits of all qualifying Hawaii residents. Even though I do not qualify for SNAP myself, I nevertheless support this crucial program, because all people should have access to good food.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:02:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion McHenry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee members,

Please pass SB960. We need to increase the SNAP staff and their pay. Because of long waits and delays, only 62% of eligible residents, including only 35% of our Kupuna are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay and adding positions within the Department of Human services, would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Please support our struggling families and kupuna in our state. Please support SB960.

Sincerely,

Robert and Marion McHenry

Princeville, Kauai

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:44:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support SB960, which will increase funding for the SNAP Department. SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state.

Thank you

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:15:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Eliel, Kapaa

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:15:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this!

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:32:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Simonds	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support expanded access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in our community.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:36:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiana Otsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am writing in **STRONG support of SB960 SD1**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rates, including establishing additional positions.

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Kiana Otsuka, Moanalua

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:09:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

Mahalo,

David Leake, Kanohe

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:18:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

In this country food insecurity should not exist. We produce enough food for everyone. However, if there are not enough workers at the Food Stamp office, people may not be able to complete the application process. This bill will ease that barrier.

Please support SB960.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

Honolulu. 96822

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:39:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariana Monasi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:35:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas (Cards) Pintor

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 12:14:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 3:06:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Llanes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members if the committee,

I am writing in support of SB960 to help ease the burden of the snap application process, both for existing workers and applicants.

Many who are eligible get lost in the shuffle due to long wait times etc.

Please pass bill SB960.

Mahalo for your service and for considering my testimony.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 6:54:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:40:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

Mahalo, Bobbie Best, Wailuku

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:44:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

Aloha, my name is Keala and I am submitting testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB960.

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. I would know, as I am one of those applicants and the wait times I've had, to speak to a representative is absurd. I basically have to show up super early and take off the entire day of work because the process takes so long.

As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keala Fung, Honolulu

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:36:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lela Kalama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

mahalo

Lela Kalama

keaaui, HI

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:00:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leo Nahe Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nō,

Please support SB 960. SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state!

Na,

Leo Nahe Smith | Pearl City, HI

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:25:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

Thanks for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 10:38:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing in support of SB960. SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

Many thanks,
Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 11:16:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

strong support

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 12:21:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Adair-Leland Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 1:11:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasman Kekai Mattox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Please support SB960.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 1:43:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I strongly support passing this bill so that those who are eligible for SNAP will receive their benefits in a timely manner. The SNAP office needs to be fully staff with living wage and as a result, the public is better serve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,
Michelle

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 2:58:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state.

As someone who struggles to care for a houseless/mentally ill/no phone family member (my father) it is incredibly difficult to complete all the steps to be enrolled for SNAP, and I am of sound mind and health. I can't imagine those who have no support/understanding and very little means to go through the paperwork and wait for the interview which takes hours to get ahold of your interviewer although you are given a set meeting time. Then the application gets rejected and we start the process over again, wasting limited resources in all aspects. I feel for these SNAP employees, it must be difficult to know the need is so great but not have the appropriate funding to properly execute your job. Please support SB960.

Sincerely,

Danielle Thompson

Honolulu, HI

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 4:29:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglass Adams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG** support of SB960, which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rates. SNAP applicants often face 4+ hours-long waits to speak with a representative, with many giving up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help. As a result, only 62% of eligible residents, including just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state.

I encourage the Committee to pass this measure with a favorable recommendation for Senate passage.

very respectfully,

Douglass Adams

Hilo, Hawai'i

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 4:42:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
G L Hutchinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HElp families keep SNAP benefits

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:48:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisa W Johnston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support the expansion of the SNAP program and staffing and resources required to do so.

Nutrition is the foundation of a healthy citizen. Everyone must be fed adequately; it is only humane.

Thank you,

Elisa W. Johnston Makiki

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:56:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Armstrong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing to ask that you support SB960. The SNAP departments are understaffed! This creates long waits and backlogs for people trying to get these vital benefits. It creates much larger workloads for the employees who work in the SNAP department. That leads to overwhelm, low productivity and worker burnout. Then the department is further understaffed, new employees take time to get trained properly. The workloads increase even more, the waits for applicants become longer and longer.

It becomes a vicious cycle!

SB 960 must be passed to keep the SNAP departments running. Without adequate staffing, your constituents, including keiki and kupuna, are not getting the food they need and deserve. No one should go hungry. Especially not children and the elderly. Please, please pass this bill to keep the people of Hawaii fed.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 2:18:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am in favor of appropriating more funds for SNAP, especially in this time. Mahalo.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 4:33:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Please support SB 960 SD 1 which, to my understanding, would increase Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program staff and their pay.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 8:58:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lily N	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The SNAP department is understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applications. Please help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-960-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 9:12:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samantha Haney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB960. The SNAP department is critically understaffed and unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state.