

- . . . -

**ACT 6**

S.B. NO. 2333

A Bill for an Act Making an Emergency Appropriation for General Assistance.

*Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:*

SECTION 1. This Act is recommended by the governor for immediate passage in accordance with section 9 of article VII of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

**SECTION 2.** Act 178, Session Laws of Hawaii 2005, appropriated a certain designated sum to the department of human services to provide funds for the general assistance program under the benefit, employment, and support services division for the fiscal period beginning July 1, 2005, and ending June 30, 2006.

A critical funding emergency exists. Pursuant to section 346-53(b), Hawaii Revised Statutes, the general assistance program is a block grant program. The maximum allowance a general assistance recipient may receive is determined by dividing the amount of the appropriation by the number of general assistance recipients. The general assistance program will expend all appropriated funds before the end of the current fiscal year and the department will be unable to maintain the current maximum \$418 per month general assistance payment benefit to approximately three thousand eight hundred fifty disabled recipients. The current assistance grant for disabled individuals is based on 62.5 per cent of the 1993 federal poverty level. This amount is barely enough to cover living expenses for individuals on a fixed income who have no other viable means of support. Stopping the grant payment or reducing the amount of the grant payment for these individuals poses a real threat to these individuals' health and safety. To prevent the reduction of general assistance payments in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2005-2006, additional funds are urgently needed.

**SECTION 3.** There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii, the sum of \$416,718, or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2005-2006 to be used for general assistance payments.

**SECTION 4.** The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of human services for the purposes of this Act.

**SECTION 5.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved April 13, 2006.)