

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1764-24

Honolulu, Hawaii
MAR 25, 2024

RE: H.R. No. 31
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Human Services, to which was referred H.R. No. 31 entitled:

"HOUSE RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ECONOMIC RESEARCH ORGANIZATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF WAYS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BENEFITS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to request the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization to conduct a study of ways to increase access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, including:

- (1) Public policy options for addressing the benefits cliff created by SNAP's eligibility requirements, including a cost-benefit analysis of expanding eligibility to households that are three hundred percent above the federal poverty level; and
- (2) An estimate of the number of Hawaii residents whose income is below the three hundred percent federal poverty level and who may become eligible for SNAP benefits if the State expands income eligibility to this level; and

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(3) An estimate of the number of residents who are currently eligible for SNAP, but not enrolled; and

(4) Other issues that the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization determines to be important in increasing access to SNAP benefits.

Your Committee received testimony in support from Democratic Party of Hawaii; Hawaii Public Health Institute; and AlohaCare. Your Committee received comments from the Hawaii State Department of Human Services; University of Hawaii; and UHERO.

Your Committee finds that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are crucial in providing food assistance to some of Hawaii's most economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Many families just below SNAP's income eligibility threshold decline pay increases because the financial benefit of increased economic opportunities does not exceed the potential cost of losing SNAP benefits, thus creating a SNAP benefits cliff. Your Committee further finds that increasing access to SNAP benefits would help economically vulnerable households meet their basic needs without limiting their earning potential.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Striking language regarding education level requirements of SNAP recipients;
- (2) Adding language requesting relevant State departments and agencies to provide the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization with access to information to successfully complete the study;
- (3) Adding language requesting the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization to submit both a preliminary and final report of the study; and
- (4) Amending the date that the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization is requested to submit a preliminary and final report of the study.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.R. No. 31, as



amended herein, and recommends that it be referred to your
Committee on Finance in the form attached hereto as H.R. No. 31,
H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services,



LISA MARTEN, Chair



