

JAN 20 2023

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many low-income
2 households struggle to purchase food due to Hawaii's high cost
3 of living and food prices. The Supplemental Nutrition
4 Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp
5 Program, is crucial to providing necessary food assistance to
6 some of Hawaii's most disadvantaged citizens.

7 The legislature also finds that in November 2022, over one
8 hundred fifty thousand people in Hawaii participated in SNAP.
9 Hawaii secures over \$950,000,000 annually in SNAP funding, yet
10 the need for food in Hawaii remains unmet. Households with
11 incomes above two hundred per cent of the poverty level, as
12 established by the United States Department of Agriculture, are
13 ineligible for SNAP benefits, yet these household are still
14 unable to achieve self-sufficiency. A household of four earning
15 \$64,000 per year is ineligible for SNAP benefits yet earns
16 \$20,000 less than the amount necessary to achieve self-
17 sufficiency and afford basic needs.



1 The legislature further finds that the two hundred per cent
2 poverty level cutoff creates an extreme benefits cliff in which
3 an additional \$1 per month earned by a household can result in
4 over \$2,900 in SNAP benefits lost per year for a single adult.
5 For a household of four, an additional \$1 per month earned can
6 result in \$10,000 in SNAP benefits lost per year. In addition,
7 SNAP's benefits cliff disincentivizes individuals from reaching
8 their greatest potential, since individuals must determine
9 whether the financial benefits of pursuing economic
10 opportunities exceed the potential loss in food assistance.
11 These Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE)
12 individuals and households are in dire need of the very
13 assistance from which they are disqualified. Hawaii not only has
14 the opportunity but the responsibility to help these households.
15 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds and provide
16 an additional minimum benefit of \$250 per month per person for
17 households eligible for SNAP who have incomes below the two
18 hundred per cent federal poverty level, as established by the
19 United States Department of Agriculture, and provide additional
20 assistance to households whose incomes are too high to qualify
21 for SNAP benefits by expanding SNAP eligibility beyond the two



1 hundred per cent federal poverty line and creating a gradual
2 decline in benefits as household income increases.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§346- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;
7 supplemental monthly benefits. (a) The minimum monthly benefit
8 for a household eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
9 Program benefits and whose household income is below two hundred
10 per cent of the federal poverty level, as established by the
11 United States Department of Agriculture, shall be \$250 per
12 person; provided that the additional benefits shall be
13 supplemented using state general funds.

14 (b) The additional benefits established in subsection (a)
15 shall apply to a household whose monthly income is above two
16 hundred per cent of the federal poverty level, as established by
17 the United States Department of Agriculture, and meets all other
18 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program eligibility
19 requirements; provided that for every \$1 earned in excess of the
20 two hundred per cent poverty level, the household's benefit
21 shall decrease by 20 cents per person."



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
4 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
5 year 2024-2025 to administer additional Supplemental Nutrition
6 Assistance Program benefits established pursuant to section 2 of
7 this Act.

8 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
9 of human services for the purposes of this Act.

10 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

11 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. S. L.', is written over a horizontal line.

S.B. NO. 940

Report Title:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Minimum Monthly Benefits; Eligibility; Department of Human Services; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes an additional minimum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit of \$250 per month per person for SNAP-eligible households whose income is below two hundred per cent of the federal poverty level, as established by the United States Department of Agriculture. Requires that SNAP-eligible households whose monthly income exceeds two hundred per cent of the federal poverty level receive a graduated decline of additional SNAP benefits. Requires state general funds to be used to supplement the cost of the additional benefits. Appropriates funds.

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