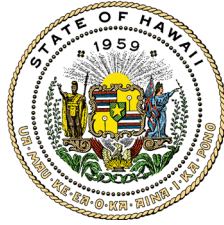


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAI'I
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE



STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813-2831

CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR
Executive Office on Aging

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

Fax
(808) 586-0185

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB960 SD1, HD1
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
REP. KYLE T. YAMASHITA, CHAIR
REP. JENNA TAKENOUCI, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 3:30 P.M. in Conference Room 308

EOA Position: The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health (DOH) supports SB960 SD1, HD1.

Fiscal Implications: Appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for FY2025-2026 and the same sum for FY2026-2027 to strengthen access to the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) by authorizing differential pay increases, establishing new positions for SNAP program, and taking on new initiatives to improve program participation rates.

Purpose and Justification: The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to DHS to enhance staffing related to SNAP. The COVID 19 pandemic significantly increased food insecurity for many individuals, including kūpuna. With the high cost of living and increasing costs for healthcare and prescription drugs many kūpuna live on fixed incomes and struggle financially.

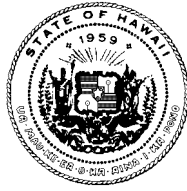
For individuals and families dealing with food insecurity SNAP provides a safety net and helps those with limited income buy nutritious food, enabling them to maintain a healthy diet. As discussed in the

bill, by eliminating the net income criteria, more households will be eligible for SNAP. Additionally, by enhancing staffing for the SNAP program, more households, including kupuna, may access SNAP benefits, experience food security and live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Recommendation: EOA supports SB960 SD1 and defers to the DHS for its implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 25, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 960 SD1 HD1 - RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

Hearing: March 27, 2025, 3:30 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports 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. (HD1)

The Committee on Health and Human Services (SD1) 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.

The Committee on Human Services and Homelessness (HD1) further amended the measure by making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

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 Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division (BESSD) has a workforce vacancy rate of approximately 25 percent for eligibility workers (averaging 70 positions) and 50 percent for clerical staff (averaging 49 positions) 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 interviews 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.

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

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

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 9:52:16 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Benson Medina | County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Hawai'i County Department of Research and Development supports this bill.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 4:11:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Edmar Castillo | Edmar Castillo Photography | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Committee Name: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Re: Support for Bill No. SB960 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Committee Members,

My name is Edmar Castillo and I am a Wedding + Family Photographer based in Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

I am reaching out to express my strong **support** for Bill No. SB960 SD1 HD1, an essential legislative measure that could enhance access to SNAP and bolster food security in our state. This bill aims to tackle staffing issues by ensuring the SNAP department is equipped with a sufficient number of personnel to manage the large influx of applicants. By expanding the staff positions within the Department of Human Services, we can significantly raise the enrollment numbers for SNAP.

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of Bill No. SB960 SD1 HD1. This bill is essential to building a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i.



Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, March 27, 2025
3:30 p. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 308 and via videoconference

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

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance:

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 HD 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 HD 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



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
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 3:30PM

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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. Despite being a critical resource for so many people, SNAP is notoriously difficult for states to administer, and for people who need it to get through the application process. Even with planned eligibility system upgrades, the program still requires “merit-based” eligibility workers to review applications, conduct interviews, and verify documents.

DHS is working overtime to fill vacancies, streamline procedures, and alleviate 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.² 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 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.>



Protect Democracy Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org

info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: House Committee on Finance
Hearing Date/Time: March 27, 2025 3:30PM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 308
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB960 SD1

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, 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.



To: House Committee on Finance
Hearing Date/Time: March 27, 2025 3:30PM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 308
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB960 SD1 HD1

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB960 SD1 HD1 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, Kaua'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 .



March 27, 2025

RE: Support for SB 960, SD1, HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our support for SB 960, SD1, HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve SNAP participation rates, including establishing additional positions.

For over 40 years, Hawai'i Foodbank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Hawai'i. As the state's leading hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank distributes food to families and individuals on O'ahu and in Kaua'i County through direct service programs and through our network of 266 agency partners and pantries. Last year, we served an average of over 150,000 people each month, distributing a total of 21 million pounds of nutritious food, including 5.9 million pounds of fresh produce.

Hawai'i Foodbank is also contracted as a SNAP outreach provider through the State. In this role, our team has seen firsthand the challenges SNAP applicants face. Our data shows that individuals wait 2.6 hours on average to speak with a representative and one client reported waiting over 9 hours. As a result, many give up on the process entirely due to the inability to get help and so many eligible residents, including our kūpuna, are not enrolled in this vital program.

The Department of Human Services SNAP department is critically understaffed. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment, bringing in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. We also ask that you move up the effective date of the bill to July 1, 2025 to provide this critical support to DHS as soon as possible.

Food security is a critical issue in Hawai'i, where one in three households lack comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. SNAP is one of our most important anti-hunger programs, offering choice and healthy options for families who need extra support putting food on the table.

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



SB960 SD1 HD1SNAP Improve Rates

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Thursday March 27, 2025 3:30 Room 308 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.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 960 SD1 HD1: RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Thursday, 3/27/25; 3:30 PM; Videoconference and Room 308

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members, Committee on Finance:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i **strongly supports SB 960 SD1 HD1**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rates.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH), a community-based organization, has provided social services in Hawai'i for over 77 years, assisting 40,000 people annually. Our services target the most vulnerable in Hawai'i, including elders, veterans, children, families, houseless individuals, and immigrants. 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, the State recently removed the net income eligibility criteria which would open up the SNAP services to approximately 13,000 to 14,000 new households!

This expansion of SNAP to many workforce families who are struggling with the lack of food is greatly needed. However, applying for SNAP benefits is very challenging under the current system. We strongly support funding to enable DHS to implement incentives and other strategies to fill vacancies and retain experienced staff and to make other needed improvements.

Take action now! This bill would strengthen the DHS's staffing capacity and operational efficiency. This will give our local families increased access to food assistance and ensure that more eligible households can benefit from this essential program.

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.



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

House Committee on Finance

March 27, 2025, at 3:30PM

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

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 House Committee on Finance
Thursday, March 27, 2025; 3:30 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

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

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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, House 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.

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 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@hawaiiipca.net.

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: **SB 960 SD1 HD1 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 27, 2025, 3:30 PM

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 960 SD1 HD1**. 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>

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 9:53:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| laurel brier | Kauai Women's Caucus | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Food insecurity rates are alarmingly high in Hawaii with 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Many go without the SNAP benefits they qualify for because the application process is too laborious and frustrating given the poorly staffed SNAP department. Given the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Let's improve the pay and increase the staffing for this important program. Strong support for SB960



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |

Honolulu, HI 96813

P: 808-533-1292 | e:

info@hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Chair*

Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Vice Chair*

Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*

Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*

Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*

Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*

Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Finance

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 27, 2025

TIME: 3:30pm

RE: SB960 SD1 HD1 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.



Subject: Strong Support for SB960 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

To: Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and the House committee on Finance,

Hawaii Food+ Policy **strongly supports SB960** which seeks to strengthen one of Hawaii's most vital anti-hunger and economic programs by appropriating funds to support staffing for the Department of Human Services. Currently, the department is responsible for serving over 160,000 residents but lacks the necessary workforce to effectively administer SNAP. This program is a proven economic driver, generating **\$1.50 in GDP for every \$1 provided** to beneficiaries. To ensure that SNAP continues to keep local families healthy and economically active, we must invest in a workforce. Food + Policy strongly supports SB960 for its systematic approach to enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of nutrition assistance programs.

Addressing logistical shortcomings within SNAP is critical as we work toward the goals outlined in the state's Aloha + Challenge. Hawaii's local food production continues to decline due to farmers struggling with rising production costs. A well-supported SNAP program supports investment in local agriculture, directly benefiting farmers and strengthening our state's food security. Your support for SB960 will be a catalyst for a more sustainable and resilient Hawaii, aligning with our cultural, environmental, and economic ambitions.

Strengthening SNAP ensures a crucial economic stimulus, providing stability for families facing rising costs. SB960 takes an intergenerational approach to improving public health and resource distribution that is a priority for our state's wellbeing. By reinforcing the Department of Human Services with adequate funding, we secure Hawaii's present and future ability to care for its residents. Families struggling with rising food prices are being pushed into an unsustainable cycle of demand. Hawaii residents spend an estimated \$1.1 billion annually on the direct and indirect medical costs of diabetes, a condition that affects 8.5% of the state's population. This is just one example of the many food-related diseases impacting public health. (Meter) Access to food through SNAP allows families to purchase healthier food they likely wouldn't have due to financial restrictions. **Passing SB960 will give our local struggling to afford basic needs the opportunity to access essential resources for their well-being and in return will increase the overall wellbeing of our state.**

Mahalo,
Hawaii Food + Policy Team

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



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Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports SB960.**

By enhancing SNAP access and establishing additional positions, this bill not only empowers local families with improved food security but also strengthens the capacity of local agriculture to meet the nutritional needs of our communities.

Enabling SNAP benefits allows more families to afford fresh, locally grown produce, directly linking farmers with consumers. This crucial support fosters a robust local food economy, enabling farmers to invest further in sustainable farming practices and innovative agricultural solutions. Moreover, increasing SNAP accessibility through expanded staffing and resources ensures that the program's benefits reach those who most need them, reinforcing food equity across the state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



ALOHA CARE

To: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Director of Public Policy
Sarielyn Curtis, External Affairs Specialist

Hearing: Thursday, March 27, 2025, 3:30 PM, Conference Room 308

RE: **SB960 SD1 HD1 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SB960 SD1 HD1**. This measure appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rates, including establishing additional positions.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai‘i’s community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 70,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 37 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai‘i’s only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare’s commitment to whole person care includes addressing a variety of social determinants of health, including access to care, economic stability, and nutrition among other factors. According to the Hawai‘i Foodbank, approximately 1 in 3 families in Hawai‘i are food insecure.¹ We understand that without access to affordable healthy food, the health and well-being of our members is negatively impacted. Increasing access to SNAP is critical in closing the food access gap, decreasing the financial burden on families, and improving overall health outcomes.

From keiki to kūpuna, access to nutritious meals will improve overall health and decrease adverse health outcomes. Families with access to SNAP are more likely to see their doctors for routine health checkups, preventing chronic health conditions and increasing the ability to manage disease.² For our pregnant mothers and babies,

¹ hawaiiifoodbank.org/food-insecurity/

² [SNAP Is Linked With Improved Health Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)



maternal and early childhood access to SNAP is correlated to improved birth outcomes and long-term health outcomes as adults. For elderly populations, access to healthy food may be the difference in whether they can continue living in their communities independently, decreasing the need for medical interventions and emergency department visits.³ Investing in SNAP, and making sure the program is staffed appropriately, is a long-term solution that will support our ‘ohana and most vulnerable populations’ health and quality of life.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of **SB960 SD1 HD1**.

³ [Hawai'i Medicaid State Plan and Demonstration](#)



HIPHI Board

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Hawaiian Research Office

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

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: March 26, 2025

To: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

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

Hrg: Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 3:30 PM, Conference Room 308

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) coalition is in **support with amendments of SB 960 HD1**, 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](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, appearing to read "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>

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 3:19:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Jean Butel | 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 make this bill effective this year, not in 2027. Our people need help now.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 3:21:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Caroline Azelski | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Support. Thank you.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 3:44:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| David Stuppelbeen | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this bill. Please vote yes. Mahalo!

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 5:44:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Suzanne Fields | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Legislators:

A community in dire need of support and assistance is the SNAP population and the folks who serve that population.

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 make this bill effective this year, not in 2027. Our people need help now. With the challenges happening at the Federal level, Hawaii MUST support our people NOW!

Mahalo for your support.

Suzanne Fields

Haiku, Maui

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 9:00:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Thomas Brandt | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Strong support!

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 7:52:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Anne Leake | 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 make this bill effective this year, not in 2027. Our people need help now.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 9:05:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Shay Chan Hodges | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB960. This bill is essential to building a thriving food-secure Hawaii.

House Committee on Finance
Hearing: March 27, 2025 at 3:30 pm
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

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

Testimony IN SUPPORT

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

My name is Christine Andrews and I am submitting this testimony today from Wailuku, Maui in support of SB960. 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 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 as a mechanism to address this shameful situation.

Mahalo,

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

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:22:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Hayley Peter-Contesse | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:23:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| B.A. McClintock | 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1. Mahalo.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:23:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:52:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Committee on Finance Chair and Members,

Although I and my family are lucky enough to have financial security, I am asking you to support SB960 SD1 HD1 for those in our community who are not so fortunate. 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:55:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Michael Menchetti | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support staffing for SNAP

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:59:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| 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, 96816

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:03:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

I urge you to support SB960 SD HD1, which will Increase pay for SNAP workers and add staff positions within the Department of Human Services thereby improving efficiency and boostiong enrollment.

This bill is necessary beacause 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 are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state.

Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:04:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Christy Shaver | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Every day, too many families in our state are forced to choose between paying bills and putting food on the table. Despite the critical importance of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), only 62% of eligible residents—and just 35% of our kūpuna—are enrolled.

Why? SNAP applicants often face more than four hours of waiting just to speak with a representative. Many give up, unable to access the help they need. This is largely due to a severe staffing shortage within the Department of Human Services.

SB960 SD1 HD1 would address this crisis by increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding much-needed staff positions. These changes would help fill vacancies, improve processing times, and ensure more eligible residents get the support they deserve.

Boosting enrollment to just 75% would bring in over \$100 million in federal support—dollars that would go directly to struggling families and our local economy.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i reporting food insecurity, and federal support diminishing, it's time for our state to step up.

Please support SB960 SD1 HD1 and help ensure no one in our community goes hungry.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:22:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Emelia Briscoe | 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:34:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

I write in strong support of SB960 SD HD1. 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further.

Mahalo for your attention.

Dr. Lorna Holmes

Honolulu 96817

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:48:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| pamela burrell | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

I strongly support SB960!

As the federal government continues to decimate vital life lines to our food insecure communities and support for small and regenerative farmers, now more than ever it is critical that we take care of our food insecure communities and to ensure that our local food producers are able to weather this administration.

Now,more than ever, we need to be able to make it easier for our peaple to get food on the table. Please support this bill. Expand SNAP.

Mahalo,

pamela burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i, 96754

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:56:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Richard Bodien | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support. We need more food. Thank you, Richard Hawi

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 6:40:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Patricia Fallbeck | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Honorable Senators:

We are surfing a wave of recession, joblessness, and increased houselessness with the present Federal administration. We need to anticipate having to feed many more people through this crisis. In order to do that in an efficient, effective and , dignified way we are going to have to increase our support of the SNAP Program. This bill will move us in that direction.

Thank you for your support of all our citizens!

Dr. Patricia Fallbeck

1341 Kapiolani Blvd #18B

Honolulu, HI, 96814

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 8:28:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Lauren Kamalei Stovall | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I strongly support SB960 to fund more SNAP staff in order to provide help for the staggering amount of families in Hawai'i struggling with food insecurity.

Mahalo,

Lauren Kamalei Stovall

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 8:54:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Shannon Rudolph | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Strongly Support!

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 10:07:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Lisa Galloway | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please help feed my neighbors!

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 11:30:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Jonathan Gross | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support SB960 SDI HD1. Food security is vital to the health and future of Hawaiian residents. Thank you .

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 12:13:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.Eliel Kapaa

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 1:00:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi and Members of the Committee on Finance.

Please support SB 960 SD 1 HD 1 which, to my understanding, would be very helpful to SNAP applicants.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 9:12:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Kevin Faccenda | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this measure

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:10:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear lawmakers:

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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

Mahalo,
Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:24:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Priscilla Stuckey | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha, Committee Members,

Please support SB960, which provides funds to the Department of Human Services to increase the number of SNAP staff and their pay. **It's time to serve applicants more efficiently.**

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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

Priscilla Stuckey, Kihei HI

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:25:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

Aloha, my name is Keala from honolulu and im writing in strong SUPPORT of SB960.

In my experience at the SNAP office, I've often had to wait many many hours to speak with a representative, and some people 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

Mahalo for your time,

Keala Fung

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:41:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Ke'alohi Naipo | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ke'alohi Naipo, and I am writing in support of SB960 SD1 HDI.

We should all be concerned with the raising food insecurity rates across our state. One in three households are experiencing food insecurity. How can we exist comfortably knowing that our neighbors, especially the most vulnerable like our kupuna and keiki might be struggling with hunger. Access to food is a basic human right.

As a Registered Dietitian, I work regularly with individuals wanting to improve their health and wellness through food and nutrition changes. In my experience, common barriers to change include lack of access to nutritious food, and for some, lack of access to food in general.

Several of my patients depend on these SNAP services to feed their 'ohana. They have expressed concerns and shared challenges to accessing services. I suspect that with increased funding to the Department of Human Services, this will improve barriers to services, and overall improve the success of these programs for the state and our local families. Also, raising the pay and adding staff positions would help improve efficiency and boost enrollment.

With the recent cuts in federal support, it's important that our state step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. When our most vulnerable populations are well, everyone thrives.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:57:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Bianca WEst | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please increase the number of SNAP staff and their pay! Hawaii needs this!

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 11:07:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| emily gambino | 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 11:13:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

support

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 12:15:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Marc-Anthony Gamboa | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Support SB960 SD1 HD1: Me and my family were recipients of snap when my mother was a single mother raising 7 children. The government assistance kept us from going without food and proper nutrition. It is time to strengthen SNAP and show the people that although the federal government is willing to cut their benefits, Hawaii's legislature will strengthen them and support them.

I am a college student receiving SNAP benefits. The wait times are frustrating and the staff is completely understaffed. The recent federal cuts threaten to worsen these conditions.

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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Most of these households being disproportionately Hawaiian people and other ethnic minorities. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 2:37:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Julia Marrack | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support SB960 SD HD1. NAP 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

Mahalo,

Julie Marrack

Kamuela



House Committee on Finance

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: SB960 SD1 HD1

March 27th, 2025 at 3:30pm; Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the committee,

HAPA is testifying in support of SB960 SD1 HD1 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further.

Please support SB960 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 7:02:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| 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-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 7:06:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Danelle Guion | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha House Committee on Finance 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.

Mahalo!

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 8:54:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha All,

Support for SB960.

Mahalo,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

SB-960-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 10:59:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2025 3:30:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Jason Yaris | 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.

Food insecurity rates are already disturbingly high at 1 in 3 households reporting food insecurity. Given all of the recent cuts of federal support to our most vulnerable communities it is important for our local government to step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. Please support SB960 SD HD1.