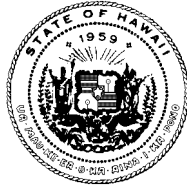


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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 10, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 961 SD1 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

Hearing: March 13, 2025, Time 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and provides the following comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature. Effective 7/1/2027. (SD1)

The Committee on Health and Human Services amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2027, to allow the Department of Human Services to complete the implementation of its new eligibility system for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The Department has identified that the current SNAP household count is at approximately 84,000, with the number of individuals participating totaling nearly 160,000.

Individuals aged sixty (60) years of age or older comprise twenty (20) percent of the overall number of SNAP participants and are part of approximately thirty-five (35) percent of all SNAP households. More research is needed to determine the number of households that are only composed of individuals aged sixty (60) years or older and the number of households entirely composed of adults with disabilities. However, we anticipate the proposed change to the number of eligible senior households would increase the overall workload and overload the processing capacity to process benefit eligibility determination using our current eligibility system and the present workforce.

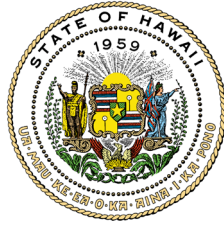
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) oversees SNAP and allows states the option to extend the certification period for SNAP households aged sixty years or older from twelve (12) months to twenty-four (24) months without a waiver. However, due to limitations of our present eligibility system, certification periods cannot be extended automatically beyond the 12 months.

The Department will be implementing a new eligibility system in the fall of 2026 that will be able to support what is proposed in this measure by having the ability to implement and automate the extended 24-month certification period.

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

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

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(808) 586-0185

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB961 SD1
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS
REP. LISA MARTEN, CHAIR
REP. IKAIKA OLDS, VICE CHAIR

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

Hearing: Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 10:00 A.M. in Conference Room 329

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

Fiscal Implications: No appropriation is included in the measure.

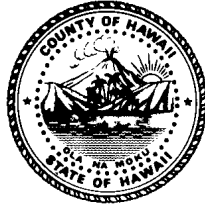
Purpose and Justification: The purpose of this measure is to require the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and provide a report to the Legislature. 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 those 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. More individuals may be eligible for SNAP but are not enrolled in the program.

The Elderly Simplified Application Project can increase participation with low-income, older adults in the SNAP. The project is designed to increase the efficiency of SNAP and improve delivery of SNAP benefits to eligible households by simplifying the application, interview, and verification process. The Elderly Simplified Application Project decreases the burden on older adults who may face challenges navigating complex application processes. With the Elder Simplified Application Project more kūpuna will access SNAP benefits, experience food security and live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Recommendation: EOA supports the intent of SB961 SD1 and defers to the Department of Human Services for its implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: March 7, 2025

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2

SUBJECT: SB 961 SD1

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

I am writing to you in strong support of SB 961 SD1, extending certification periods for most Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP) households, including up to 36 months for kūpuna households.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP provides essential support to families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligibility issues, resulting in recipients losing their much-needed benefits.

Extending the certification period for all recipients would reduce these barriers and ensure more people are able to maintain their SNAP benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. These changes would ease the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone.

I kindly ask that you **pass SB 961 SD1**.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Kagiwada", is written over a horizontal line.

Jenn Kagiwada

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 11th FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-2277 • EMAIL: resilientoahu@honolulu.gov • INTERNET: www.resilientoahu.org

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



BENJAMIN SULLIVAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA

KEALOHA FOX
DEPUTY DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
HOPE PO'O & HOPE KAHU OLA LOA

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025, 10:00 A.M.

STATE OF HAWAII
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 961, SD1
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

BY,

BENJAMIN SULLIVAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee:

The City and County of Honolulu ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** SB961, SD1, which requires the Department of Human Services to increase the minimum certification periods for participating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

The City is actively working to increase local food security, particularly for low- to moderate-income households that have historically faced barriers to accessing healthy, affordable food. With 28% of O'ahu's households experiencing food insecurity and 37% of residents living below the ALICE threshold, ensuring consistent and reliable access to nutrition is essential to our efforts.

This measure supports the City's food security initiatives by reducing administrative barriers that may prevent eligible individuals and families from maintaining their SNAP benefits. By reducing the risk of benefit interruptions, we can better ensure families can consistently access the food they need while also reducing workloads for both applicants and department staff. By streamlining access to SNAP benefits, particularly for our most vulnerable residents, SB961, SD1 strengthens both food security and economic resilience across Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB961, SD1.



SB961 SD1SNAP Adjust Min Period and Elderly Program

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Thursday, Mar 13, 2025: 10:00: Room 329 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB961 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.*

By increasing access to nutritional meals, especially for the elderly, 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 updating eligibility systems and workforce, SNAP will improve nutrition, reduce food insecurity and provide 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.



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Thursday, March 13, 2025
Conference Room 329, 10:00 AM

TO: The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawai'i
RE: Support for S.B.961, SD1 Relating to SNAP Certification and ESAP

Aloha Chair Marten and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. **AARP supports S.B. 961 SD1 which adjusts the minimum certification periods for SNAP benefits households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP).**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides essential access to healthy food for many low-income households, including older adults. Enrolling in SNAP has been shown to improve overall well-being. However, it is crucial to simplify the SNAP application process to ensure more eligible individuals can benefit from this program.

Many older adults do not enroll in SNAP due to various reasons, such as not knowing they are eligible, stigma, and confusion regarding the application process. By reducing red tape and administrative barriers, we can help eligible kupuna access SNAP more easily.

AARP supports Hawaii's participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP). This initiative allows states the flexibility to simplify the application process for local residents and extend certification periods, thereby reducing the frequent entry and exit from the program.

Maintaining an adequate and nutritious diet is vital for health, quality of life, and independence as we age. Making it easier for kupuna to obtain the nutrition they need will lead to a healthier community.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 961, SD1.



Protect Democracy Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org

info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Hearing Date/Time: March 13, 2025 10:00AM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329

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 SB961 SD1 which would require the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

The SNAP recertification process requires difficult paperwork and documentation, making it difficult for the applicants to complete the application. Hawai'i can extend the SNAP certification, increasing the chance of eligible recipients receiving the benefits. Hawai'i can also participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project which would allow kupuna to recertify every three years instead of every year. Please pass this measure to help the struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. No one should go hungry because they couldn't recertify 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 Human Services & Homelessness
Hearing Date/Time: March 13, 2025 10:00AM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB960 SD1

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

Members of AAUW of Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB961 SD1 which would require the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for households, and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

The SNAP recertification process is complex and many eligible applicants face difficulties applying to receive this benefit. Hawai'i can extend the SNAP certification period and reduce the number of recipients losing the benefits. Hawai'i can also participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project which would allow kupuna to recertify only once every three years. 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 .



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for S.B. 961 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 10:00AM

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **S.B. 961**, which would require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), and report to the Legislature.

SNAP is a critical lifeline for more than 160,000 Hawai‘i residents. Without it, many of these individuals would not have any money to pay for food at all. Since benefits are federally funded, federal rules require tedious paperwork and documentation both upon initial application and for periodic recertification.¹ Some SNAP users lose these crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility. This phenomenon, known as “churn,” adds significantly to the administrative burden of administering SNAP at the state level.

This bill would provide some relief for the churn issue. Federal rules allow states to extend the SNAP certification period to 12 months for most households, with just a six-month “interim report.” However, Hawai‘i currently requires a full recertification every six months, increasing the possibility for churn. For households with seniors or people with disabilities, Hawai‘i allows a longer 12-month certification, but for these households, it can be as long as 24 months, or even up to 36 months using what’s known as the ESAP waiver. In addition to the three-year certification period, this waiver allows those who are 60+ to waive the recertification interview and allows for a simplified application process. As of 2024, 23 other states have already implemented ESAP and there are more to follow suit.²

Table 1. Hawai‘i certification periods vs. maximum federal certification periods

| Group | Hawai‘i’s current certification period | Maximum allowable certification period |
|---|--|--|
| Kūpuna (ages 60+) or adults with disabilities | Every 12 months | Every 36 months* |
| All other households | Every 6 months | Every 12 months |

*36 months is only allowable as part of the ESAP waiver; 24 months requires a simpler waiver application

The proposed extended certification periods for most households have twofold benefits, reducing workload for both applicants and eligibility staff. We have a unique opportunity to ease the burden on both sides of the application process. Thank you for considering these comments in your deliberation of S.B. 961.

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

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP State Options Report,” Food and Nutrition Service, 2024, p. 26. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-16th-state-options-report-june24.pdf>

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:39:52 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Sylvia Dolena | Pele Lani Farm LLC, Kulia I Ka nu'u Outreach Services | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Support Bill SB961. Kupuna's and other vulnerable adults need access to SNAP and currently the services and benefits are out of their reach. They are in dire need.

Mahalo,

Sylvia Dolena

Pele Lani Farm LLC, Kulia I Ka nu'u Outreach Services



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB961 SD1, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

March 13, 2025

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Human Services & Homelessness Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** SB961 SD1, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party supports public funding going towards affordable and accessible long-term care programs for kūpuna and their families.

This bill simplifies the eligibility determination process for elderly households through the Elderly Simplified Application Project, establishing recertification periods of at least 36 months and waiving recertification interviews for eligible households. These changes reduce administrative burdens and make it easier for elderly and disabled individuals to access and retain benefits. Furthermore, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is mandated to report on the implementation and utilization of SNAP and the Elderly Simplified Application Project, ensuring transparency and ongoing assessment. Overall, this bill enhances accessibility and management of SNAP, particularly for elderly and disabled individuals, while improving administrative efficiency and oversight.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in Support of SB961 SD1, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.



March 13, 2025

Re: Support for SB 961, SD 1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our support for SB 961, SD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This bill requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for SNAP benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

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. SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits.

Extending the certification period for all recipients would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. These changes would ease the burden on both applicants and DHS SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone. We also ask that you move up the effective date of the bill to July 1, 2025 to help improve access to SNAP benefits 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. We support measures that help improve access to this critical program.

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



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 Human Services and Homelessness

March 13, 2025, at 10:00AM

RE: SUPPORT for SB 961, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, 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 strong support for **SB 961**. This bill would require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), and report to the Legislature.

SNAP is critical to the over 160,000 residents who receive benefits in Hawai'i. However with 1 in 3 households experiencing food insecurity, it is still not reaching everyone who needs help. One issue our Network members report is that the frequent need to recertify can result in some families losing benefits, even when they still qualify. Extending certification periods to the maximum allowable by federal law could alleviate the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff workers.

This bill would extend the certification period to 12 months for most households and up to 36 months for kūpuna and people with disabilities—an opportunity to reduce the risk of losing benefits due to paperwork issues. Following suit of 23 other states, implementing ESAP would also simplify the process by allowing kūpuna to waive recertification interviews.¹

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of **SB 961**. Extending SNAP certification periods will be a tremendous relief for struggling families as well as eligibility staff.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP State Options Report," Food and Nutrition Service, 2024, p. 26.
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-16th-state-options-report-june24.pdf>



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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 Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 13, 2025

TIME: 10am

RE: SB961 SD1 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

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

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

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

Setting the minimum certification period for SNAP to 12 months or 24 months for kupuna households gives families and kupuna more time to utilize these benefits and achieve financial stability. This timeline can help ensure that eligible users do not lose benefits due to having to rapidly reapply. The adjusted certification timeline may reduce the administrative burden on the Department of Human Services if they are not having to process reapplications so frequently.

We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



www.getfitkauai.com

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

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

Testimony in Support of SB961 Extending SNAP Certification Periods

Get Fit Kauai strongly supports SB961, which proposes extending the certification periods for most households, including a 36-month certification period for kūpuna. This bill would help ease the challenges faced by SNAP applicants and recipients, ensuring more individuals and families can maintain their access to vital nutrition support.

Currently, SNAP applicants face significant difficulties when applying for and recertifying benefits. The recertification process often requires difficult paperwork and documentation, which can be overwhelming for recipients. As a result, many beneficiaries inadvertently lose their benefits during this process. Extending the certification period for SNAP would reduce these opportunities for individuals to lose access to critical support, making the program more reliable and accessible.

For our kūpuna, participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow them to recertify only once every three years, significantly reducing the burden on older adults who may struggle with the paperwork and administrative requirements. This change would also benefit SNAP staff by reducing their workload, allowing them to focus on providing better service to those in need.

By extending the certification periods, we can streamline the application and recertification process for everyone involved. This will not only reduce administrative burdens but also provide recipients with more consistent access to the benefits they depend on for their health and well-being.

We urge you to make this bill effective this year, rather than waiting until 2027. Our community needs help now, and by implementing SB961 immediately, we can provide greater support to our most vulnerable populations.

Mahalo,

BBrody

Bev Brody

Get Fit Kauai – Director

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

Community Coalition of Kauai County

(808) 212-4765

To: House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
Re: **SB 961 SD1 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 13, 2025, 10:00 AM

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 961 SD1**. This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), and report to the Legislature.

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 of people in Hawai'i who need the support of SNAP but are not getting it.

These measures proposed in this bill would streamline access to SNAP benefits for all households, but particularly for Hawai'i's elderly and disabled populations. By simplifying access and reducing administrative hurdles, the state can ensure that more eligible Hawai'i residents receive the assistance they need and that the local economy is boosted with more dollars going to local food retailers.

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>



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 961 SD1: RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Thursday, 3/13/25; 10:00 AM; Videoconference and Room 329

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members, Committee on Human Services and Homelessness:

Catholic Charities Hawaii **supports SB 961 SD1**, which requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households, and to participate in the Elderly Simplification Application Project.

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

We support this bill since it establishes a more reasonable recertification period of at least 36 months for adults aged 60 or older. We support the Department of Human Service's participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Project. For many elders, especially those with low English proficiency or of advanced age, more frequent recertifications have been a barrier to obtaining this very important benefit. Some of our clients have lost SNAP benefits due to lack of understanding or ability to perform the more frequent recertifications. The elderly and disabled populations mainly have stable incomes so more frequent recertifications are not needed to catch changes in income.

We also support waiving the recertification interview for eligible households. Again, this can be a barrier for these households with stable incomes.

We appreciate the legislature and DHS's support of this bill for greater efficiency for the program, and fewer barriers for elderly and disabled populations. Adequate food is essential for the health of these populations. Maintaining SNAP benefits is critical for them.

We urge your support for this bill to help simplify and streamline DHS services.

If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813 •





Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Thursday, March 13, 2025
10:00 a. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 329 and via videoconference

Re: SB 961 SD 1 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness:

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 961 SD 1, which requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

An extension in the certification periods for SNAP benefits households and participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Project will reduce the possibility of SNAP recipients, who rely on SNAP to afford the nutritious food essential to health and well-being, losing their benefits.

We urge you to support SB 961 SD 1, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

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

Gary Simon



Email garysimon@hawaii.rr.com



To: The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair
The Honorable Ikaika Olds, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

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

Hearing: Thursday, March 13, 2025, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 329

RE: **SB961 SD1 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SB961 SD1**. This measure requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

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 Hawaii 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.

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 is a long-term solution that will support our ‘ohana and most vulnerable populations’ health and quality of life. This measure increases access to SNAP and is critical in closing the food access gap, decreasing the financial burden on families, and improving overall health outcomes. For these reasons, we support this measure.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of **SB961 SD1**.

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



March 12, 2025

Subject: **SB961** Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Hawai'i Food+ Policy strongly **supports SB961**, which seeks to require the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households, and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

SNAP provides essential support to many families across Hawai'i, yet applicants often face significant barriers in navigating the application and recertification process. SB961 aims to reduce these burdens by extending the certification period for all recipients and ensuring that kūpuna can recertify only once every three years through the Elderly Simplified Application Program.

By streamlining SNAP processes, SB961 will reduce administrative barriers that cause eligible recipients to lose their benefits, ensure more consistent access to nutrition assistance for vulnerable populations, lower the workload for both applicants and SNAP staff to improve efficiency and service delivery.

We urge the committee to **pass SB961** to support equitable food security and public health in Hawai'i's communities.

Mahalo,
The 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.



HIPHI Board

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John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native
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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 12, 2025

To: Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

RE: Support for SB 960 SD1 Relating To The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Hrg: Thursday, March 12, 2025, at 10:00 AM, Conference Room 329

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) coalition is in **support with amendments of SB 961 SD1**, which requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for households, and would participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

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

One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity. 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. 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.

Short Certification Periods

Residents in Hawai'i face frequent SNAP recertification requirements, with some needing to re-certify as often as every six months. Kūpuna (60 years and over) are required to recertify annually, even though federal regulations permit them to do so only once every three years.³

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 USDA - SNAP State Options Report.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/waivers/state-options-report>



Hawai'i has the opportunity to extend SNAP certification periods to the federal maximum for all recipients. This change would significantly reduce the paperwork burden on families and kūpuna, easing stress and administrative challenges.

Importantly, it would also reduce the risk of losing benefits during the recertification process, a common issue caused by paperwork difficulties and bureaucratic barriers. By adopting this policy, Hawai'i can ensure more consistent access to essential food assistance for its residents.

Decreased Workload for SNAP Staff

Hawai'i's SNAP department faces overwhelming demand for its services, yet it lacks sufficient staffing to meet that demand effectively. By reducing the frequency of recertification, the department can significantly decrease its administrative workload.

This would free up valuable resources and allow staff to focus on improving the overall efficiency and accessibility of both the SNAP application and recertification processes. Streamlining these operations would benefit not only the department but also the thousands of residents who rely on SNAP for essential food assistance.

Manual Extension is Better than No Extension

While the current SNAP eligibility system may not be designed to automatically accommodate three-year certification periods, manually extending certifications is a far more efficient solution than requiring full reapplications. The time required for staff to manually process an extension is significantly less than the time needed to review a new application, reducing administrative burden and ensuring continued access to food assistance for those in need. We cannot afford to delay this critical change based on the uncertain timeline of a new eligibility system that may eventually support it.

Please pass SB 961 to ensure we're doing everything we can to make SNAP as accessible as possible. Mahalo for your consideration.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate Hix".

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy



March 13, 2025

Re: Support for SB 961, SD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our support for SB 961, SD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This bill requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for SNAP benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

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. SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits.

Extending the certification period for all recipients would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. These changes would ease the burden on both applicants and DHS SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone.

Food security is a critical issue in Hawai'i, where one in three households lack comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. The Department of Human Services SNAP department is critically understaffed and we support measures that will help address the shortage. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Miller', is located below the 'With aloha,' text.

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



**American
Heart
Association.**

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

March 11, 2025

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Zia Khan, MD

Board Members
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"To be a relentless force for a world
of longer,
healthier lives."

For more information on the AHA's
educational or research programs,
visit www.heart.org or contact your
nearest AHA office.

Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on
Human Services & Homelessness

**American Heart Association Testimony for Senate Bill 961 SD1
"Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program"**

The American Heart Association is pleased to **support** Senate Bill 961, which requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum recertification periods for certain households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

For more than 50 years, SNAP has been vital in addressing food insecurity in the U.S. In 2021, 41.5 million people participated in SNAP, up from 35.7 million people pre-pandemic, once again proving to be an essential safety net during the pandemic and economic downturn. More than 37% of Hawaii's SNAP recipients are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled

For some SNAP participants, particularly the elderly and disabled, the application and recertification processes can be confusing and cumbersome. SB 961 would simplify and streamline this process for these vulnerable populations, expanding access to this health-sustaining program.

We urge your support of SB 961 to help our vulnerable local families and kupuna.

Mahalo,

Jamie Morgan
Sr. Region Lead, State Government Relations



House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: SB961 SD1

March 13th, 2025 at 10:00am; Conference Room 329

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds and members of the committee,

HAPA is testifying in support of SB961 SD1 which requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Extending the certification period for all recipients, would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. These changes would ease the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone.

Please support SB961 SD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', with a stylized, cursive script.

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 9:32:54 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Denise L Martinez | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 9:35:04 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Lois Langham | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

This is a much needed safety net for vulnerable people who would be left to fate by our current national government.

Thank you.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 10:01:48 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this measure

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 10:11:05 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 12:34:12 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Tamra Hayden | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I used to have SNAP however, I was very ill when it came time to requalify. I had a TBI from a grand mal seizure and was not able to do it at the required time. I lost my benefits.

SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Extending the certification period for all recipients, would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. These changes would ease the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 9:45:28 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Leah Morse | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 9:53:15 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Margaret Ledward | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 11:54:57 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 12:25:28 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Jason Ellinwood | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

As more and more programs that benefit the public good are cut and threatened at the federal level, the state needs to ensure that all members of our community are taken care of. The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kūpuna receive their SNAP benefits

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 3:24:46 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Colleen Finnegan | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Although the benefits of SNAP include basic nutrition, there are many barriers that prevent a significant number of applicants from receiving this government assistance. Only 62% of eligible residents, and just just 35% of our kūpuna, are enrolled in this vital program. The SNAP department is critically understaffed, unable to handle the high volume of applicants. Increasing pay for SNAP workers and adding staff positions within the Department of Human Services would fill vacancies, improve efficiency, and boost enrollment. Raising the enrollment rate to just 75% could bring over \$100 million in much-needed support to struggling families in our state. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 5:01:03 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 5:01:43 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Judith White | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

It's our kuleana to make sure all our residents are food secure. Please support.

Mahalo,

Judith C. White,

Kapaa

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 6:42:12 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 8:17:58 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Donna Mae Buscemi | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

A simplefied application form would be of benefit of all, in particular the elderly. Please pass this bill.

Thank You

Donna Buscemi

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 9:54:49 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Nancy Taylor | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I strongly endorse SB961 and thank you for the opportunity to express this support.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 10:22:03 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:20:02 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Emily Garland | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support this bill.

Mahalo,

Emily

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:20:13 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 1:19:46 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. Please pass this bill, thank you!

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 7:46:07 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Kelly Ciurej | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:11:03 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Support. Thank you.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:36:37 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Will Caron | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Marten and Vice Chair Olds,

My name is Will Caron and I am a resident of Kahalu‘u on O‘ahu's windward side, where I was born and raised.

I am writing to express strong support for SB961, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to improve SNAP access and strengthen our state’s food security landscape. This bill will enhance accessibility:

- SNAP is critical to the over 160,000 residents who receive benefits in Hawai‘i.
- SNAP applicants face many barriers to applying for federal SNAP benefits.
- Some SNAP users lose crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility.
- Over 70% of formerly incarcerated individuals are affected by not being allowed to apply to SNAP before being released.
- Elderly Simplified Application Process (ESAP) extends the recertification period to every 3 years and allows kūpuna and adults with disabilities to waive recertification interviews.

23 other states have already implemented the ESAP.

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of SB961. This bill is essential to building a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 11:04:34 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. Mahalo.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 11:20:27 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Lori Rowley | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:44:51 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Elizabeth Nelson | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their benefits. Thank you,

Elizabeth Nelson, Kaneohe

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:31:11 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am in favor of SB961 SD1, simplifying the certification for SNAP so it is more accessible for those people who qualify for the program. Mahalo.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:56:02 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha. I support SB961 which Appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rates, including establishing additional positions. Please pass this bill. We need it!!

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:56:46 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please help to simplify the eligibility certification for our kūpuna who need the assistance that SNAP can bring.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:08:22 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB961.SD1 to extend the qualifications for 3 years, instead of an annually. They don't need any more personnel, especially when duplicate copies are sent out and the person who takes applications doesn't want my correct address and letters have been sent 3 times across the island. Also when I make an appointment and the computer system knows I'm there and I wait over an hour for someone to pickup and then get cutoff. I think that people are being choosy as to who they wish to assist with their own biases as I testified in a Statewide Housing meeting in October 2024. Artifical Intelligence allows people not to think and they just send out forms not knowing or understanding how to read, write and comprehend English and are afraid to do a verbal conversation with people! Time to get rid of these people who have been in government positions for decades and taking the money provided to the locals born and raised here that need support to live in their home lands!

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:16:55 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Extending the certification period for all recipients, would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. These changes would ease the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone. Please make this bill effective this year, not in 2027. Our people need help now.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 4:21:00 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you for allowing me the ability to support SB 961 by Senator San Buenaventura. Fixing the minimum certification periods and participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Project will be a big help in serving those in need of SNAP benefits.

Mahalo,

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI 96749

Big Island

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 5:22:25 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Cynthia M Archibald | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Extending the certification period for all recipients, would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. These changes would ease the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone. Please make this bill effective this year, not in 2027. Our people need help now.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:31:24 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Eileen Cain | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Senators,

Please support recipients of SNAP food benefits, including kupuna. We need to eliminate food insecurity in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Eileen Cain, Mo'ili'ili

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:34:25 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Patti Hatzistavrakis | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I fully support **SB961 to extend certification periods for most households, including periods of 36 months for kūpuna**. SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. By extending the certification period for all recipients, these barriers would be reduced, enabling more people to maintain their benefits. Especially for our kūpuna who may not have access to the internet or transportation to fulfill this reporting process. In addition to making the process easier for SNAP recipients, the burden on customer service representatives would also be lessened.

Thank you for your consideration of **SB961** to extend certification periods for most households, including periods of 36 months for kūpuna.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:11:56 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The complicated SNAP application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Please extend the certification periods and help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits

Please show your constituents that you care about families as well as the tourism and development lobbies. Please pass this measure to increase the number of affordable childcare spots.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:24:21 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB961 because it will remove difficult barriers SNAP applicants face in order to receive benefits. One of these barriers is the recertification process which requires difficult paperwork and documentation. Many recipients lose benefits due to the current recertification requirements.

By extending the SNAP certification period, many recipients will no longer lose benefits because of the difficult recertification process.

Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kupuna to recertify only once every three years.

SB961 will reduce the workload for both applicants and SNAP staff and will improve the numbers of beneficiaries receiving uninterrupted benefits.

Thank you for considering my support for SB961

Aloha,

Beth Anderson

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 4:45:13 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

YOUR support is essential for this important bill!

SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the complicated application and recertification process often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits.

Extending the certification period for all recipients, would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. These changes would ease the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone.

Please make this bill effective this year, not in 2027. Our people need help now.

And if you need additional detail to lend your support:

- SNAP applicants face many difficulties applying for this crucial federal benefit.
- The recertification process requires difficult paperwork and documentation, resulting in many beneficiaries losing benefits during this process.
- Hawai‘i can extend the SNAP certification period, reducing opportunities for recipients to lose benefits.
- Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years.
- Reducing the workload for both applicants and SNAP staff will improve the application process for everyone.

Thank you for your support!

Suzanne Fields

Haiku, Maui

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:25:27 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Sherry Pollack | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I strongly support SB961 SD1 that requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

Eligible recipients often lose their benefits due to the complicated SNAP application and recertification process. Please pass this measure to help struggling families and kupuna receive their SNAP benefits. Mahalo!

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 5:12:32 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB 961.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 6:38:32 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Nikos Leverenz | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Chair Marten, Vice-Chair Olds, & HSH Members:

I strongly support SB 961, SD 1, which expands recertification of SNAP benefits for at least 36 months for households composed of adults over age 60 or older adults with disabilities and waives the recertification interview for eligible households.

Many SNAP users lose benefits during the recertification process even without a change in eligibility.

23 other states have already implemented the elderly simplified application process. Hawaii should join them.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-961-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 9:01:52 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Tiare Smith | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

****Testimony in Support of SB961****

Aloha e Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tiare Smith, a proud Native Hawaiian and resident of Kahalu‘u, O‘ahu, where I have lived for 45 years. As a kama‘āina deeply rooted in this community, I write to express my unequivocal support for SB961, a bill that promises to enhance the efficacy and equity of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Hawai‘i. This legislation represents a thoughtful, pragmatic step toward alleviating the burdens faced by our most vulnerable populations—particularly our kūpuna and those with disabilities—while ensuring the program’s administrative efficiency. Below, I outline the merits of this bill, acknowledge its potential shortcomings, and propose solutions to ensure its success, grounded in principles of safety, efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and equity.

The Merits of SB961

SB961 addresses a critical need in our islands, where the cost of living has precipitously escalated, disproportionately disenfranchising low-income households. By extending SNAP certification periods to a minimum of twelve months for general households and twenty-four months for those with all adult members aged sixty or older, this bill reduces the bureaucratic burden on beneficiaries. The inclusion of the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), with its thirty-six-month recertification periods and waived interviews for eligible households, further streamlines access for our kūpuna and disabled adults—groups often marginalized by complex administrative processes.

These provisions are not merely procedural; they are transformative. They affirm the dignity of recipients by minimizing the frequency of intrusive recertifications, which can be antithetical to the well-being of elderly or disabled individuals. Moreover, the mandated reporting in 2028 and 2029 ensures accountability, providing lawmakers with data to refine the program’s implementation. As a Native Hawaiian, I see this as a step toward rectifying systemic inequities that have long plagued our communities, where food insecurity remains a persistent challenge despite our cultural legacy of abundance.

Potential Shortcomings and Detailed Solutions

While SB961 is laudable, it is not without risks. I identify two primary concerns: (1) the potential for administrative oversight gaps due to extended certification periods, and (2) the delayed implementation date of July 1, 2027, which postpones relief for those in immediate need. Below, I address each con with tailored solutions that prioritize safety, efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and equity.

Con 1: Risk of Administrative Oversight Gaps

Extended certification periods, while reducing recipient burden, could inadvertently allow eligibility errors to persist undetected, potentially compromising program integrity or overextending benefits to ineligible households.

****Solution:**** Implement a hybrid monitoring system combining automated data cross-checks with targeted outreach. The Department of Human Services (DHS) could leverage existing state databases (e.g., tax records, Social Security updates) to flag significant income or household composition changes annually, supplemented by a randomized 10% audit of long-certification households. To enhance cost-effectiveness, DHS could partner with local nonprofits—such as the Hawai‘i Foodbank—to conduct low-cost, community-based eligibility reviews for kūpuna, utilizing volunteers trained at a minimal expense (e.g., \$5,000 annually for training materials). This approach ensures safety by maintaining oversight, boosts efficacy through streamlined technology, and promotes equity by embedding support within communities, all while saving an estimated \$50,000–\$75,000 annually compared to full staff-led recertifications.

Con 2: Delayed Implementation (July 1, 2027)

The two-year delay risks prolonging hardship for SNAP-eligible households, particularly given Hawai‘i’s exorbitant living costs. This deferral could exacerbate food insecurity, undermining the bill’s intent.

****Solution:**** Phase in implementation starting July 1, 2025, beginning with ESAP participation for elderly and disabled households—a group with more stable eligibility profiles—followed by broader certification extensions in 2026. To fund this acceleration cost-effectively, DHS could redirect existing federal SNAP administrative grants (typically \$10–15 million annually for Hawai‘i) toward initial setup costs (e.g., \$200,000 for system updates), avoiding new appropriations. Alternatively, a pilot program in high-need areas like Windward O‘ahu (including Kahalu‘u) could test the framework at a reduced scale, costing approximately \$100,000, with savings reinvested into statewide rollout. This phased approach ensures safety through gradual scaling, enhances efficacy by prioritizing urgent needs, and advances equity by targeting vulnerable populations first.

Conclusion

SB961 is a forward-thinking measure that aligns with our collective responsibility to care for one another—a value intrinsic to Native Hawaiian culture. Its pros—reduced administrative burdens, enhanced access for kūpuna, and data-driven accountability—far outweigh its manageable cons, which can be addressed through innovative, cost-effective solutions. As a 45-year resident of

Kahalu‘u, I have witnessed the resilience of our people amidst systemic challenges. This bill offers a chance to bolster that resilience with dignity and equity. I urge your support for SB961, with the proposed refinements, to ensure it delivers on its promise efficiently and justly.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration,

Tiare Smith

Kahalu‘u, O‘ahu