

COUNTY COUNCIL

Bill "Kaipo" Asing, Chair
Jay Furfaro, Vice Chair
Tim Bynum
Dickie Chang
Daryl W. Kaneshiro
Lani T. Kawahara
Derek S. K. Kawakami



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Peter A. Nakamura, County Clerk
Ernesto G. Pasion, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone (808) 241-6371
Fax (808) 241-6349
Email cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Room 206
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766-1371

LATE

February 5, 2009

TESTIMONY OF TIM BYNUM AND JAY FURFARO
KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL

COPY

ON
S. B. NO. 1668, HAWAII SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)
Senate Committee on Human Services
February 10, 2009
2:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016

Dear Chair Chun Oakland and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B. No. 1668 relating to Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as individual members of the Kauai County Council.

Currently, Hawaii loses millions of dollars each year in unclaimed federal funding due to a low participation rate in SNAP (72% of eligible households) under Title 7, United States Code, sections 2011 to 2027. The passage of this bill would be beneficial because it would increase the program's participation rate and bring more federal dollars to the State.

The bill proposes to reduce the State's stringent eligibility standards which are currently more restrictive than the Federal standards. Further, the bill deletes the requirement of the asset test which considers a household's savings and other non-liquid capital in determining a participant's eligibility, therefore, denying access to needy individuals to SNAP in the past. The bill also minimizes the lengthy application process which has been a deterrent for eligible households to apply for the program. Lastly, should the program's participation rate increase to 90%, the bill could generate additional federal dollars (estimated at \$45,000,000) to be spent by Hawaii consumers to boost Hawaii's economy.

For the reasons stated above, we wholeheartedly support S.B. No. 1668 and humbly request your favorable consideration of this measure.

Sincerely,

JAY FURFARO
Council Vice Chair

TIM BYNUM
Councilmember

YS/wa2009-463a

George J. Zweibel, Esq.
President, Board of Directors

M. Nalani Fujimori, Esq.
Interim Executive Director

LATE SB 1668 ~~SB 1668~~ Late

**OFFERING COMMENTS ON
SB1668 - RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

LATE

February 10, 2009 at 2:15 p.m.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii hereby provides comments to the Senate Committee on Human Services on SB359 – Relating to Human Services. I apologize for the lateness of my testimony. While we support the intent of this bill, there are several concerns that we have with it.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii provides free legal services to the low-income population of the State of Hawaii. We provided civil legal assistance to those in need through nine offices located in Lihue, Waianae, Honolulu, Kaneohe, Kaunakakai, Lanai City, Wailuku, Kona and Hilo. Over the years we have provided leadership around public benefits issues and on an annual basis update our public benefits manual and provide a two-day training on public benefits. In 2007, we conducted a statewide report to identify barriers to participation in the food stamp program.

This bill would (1) require the Department of Human Services (“DHS”) to expand the categorical eligibility for food stamps and disregard assets; (2) allow any household to apply by fax and upon the request of the department allow for telephone interviews in lieu of face-to-face interviews; (3) limit the length of the application to no more than four pages; and (4) set the gross monthly income limit for households to 185% of the Federal Poverty Guideline.

EXPANSION OF CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY

Federal regulations provide for the expansion of categorical eligibility (or eligibility due to eligibility to another financial assistance program) for the supplemental nutrition assistance program (“SNAP”). Currently, those receiving TANF/TAONF, GA, AABD and SSI are categorically eligible to receive SNAP in Hawaii.

The current group of individuals who are not categorically eligible are those who are receiving in-kind or non-cash assistance from programs funded by TANF or TANF MOE and which are designed to forward purposes 1, 2, 3 or 4. In the case of Purposes 3 or 4, participants must have a gross monthly income at or below 200% of federal poverty.

Expansion of the program to this group of individuals could greatly increase the amount of SNAP participants, however, such expansion could also lead to increased administrative burden for both DHS and programs funded by TANF or TANF MOE funds in qualify individuals through these current programs.

DISREGARD OF ASSETS

Over the last few years we have been strong advocates for the disregarding of assets. Yet our work in this area we believe takes on-going cooperation between advocates and DHS to determine what the costs will be under expansion and careful consideration of where asset disregards make the most sense. To this end, the Asset Building Task Force convened by the 2008 Legislature has a subcommittee which is currently looking at asset disregards.

While federal regulations allow for the disregarding of assets through categorical eligibility this disregard is only to the same point as to which assets are limited in the eligibility for other programs. For example, while SNAP’s asset limits are \$2,000 for an individual and \$3,000 if one applicant is over 60 or disabled, categorical

eligibility allows someone who qualifies for TANF and has a higher asset limit of \$5,000 to also receive food stamps. To disregard assets through categorical eligibility for SNAP, you would need to disregard all assets in all other public assistance programs.

INCREASED ASSET LIMITS

There is good news, however, the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 does provide for an increase in asset limits annually on October 1st. This increase in assets will be rounded down to the nearest \$250 based on the increase in the consumer price index.

APPLICATION BY FAX

We agree that more access through the allowing of applications by fax is important. In addition, federal regulations do allow for the submission of applications by mail and on-line. Currently, applicants are allowed to submit applications by mail.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS IN LIEU OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

DHS' administrative rules currently lay out a process to allow for telephone interviews in lieu of face-to-face interviews. This process follows the federal regulations exactly and according to the federal regulations, DHS must document in the case file when a waiver is granted due to hardship.

DHS may also waive the face-to-face interview in favor of a telephone interview for all households which have no earned income and all members of the household are elderly or disabled. While the current rules provide for this waiver, this waiver is only provided if the authorized representative is also unable to participate in the face-to-face interview.

LIMITATION OF THE APPLICATION TO FOUR PAGES

While the applications for public assistance are cumbersome, creating a separate application for SNAP only could lead to applicants not receive their full eligibility for other programs.

185% FPL GROSS INCOME LIMIT

Unfortunately federal regulations have a specific income test which is limited to 130% of FPL for most households and 165% FPL where elderly and disabled are a separate household. The gross income limit can be higher than these amounts if an applicant is deemed eligible through categorical eligibility.

This is an important bill that must be considered as a way to increase the participation in SNAP. The program itself provides much needed food to those in need and can also provide increased federal spending in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



M. Nalani Fujimori, Interim Executive Director

Aloha United Way

200 N. Vineyard Blvd., Suite 700
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-3938
Telephone (808) 536-1951
Fax (808) 543-2222
www.auw.org



LATE

February 9, 2009

Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Tuesday, February 10, 2009 at 2:15 P.M.
Conference Room 016

SB 1668: Relating to Human Services- Written Testimony in Support

Dear Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way encourages your favorable consideration of SB 1668 which eases the eligibility requirements for benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Aloha United Way believes that benefits such as this can help motivate recipients to move toward self-sufficiency. However, programs that help augment income are only one of the necessary ingredients needed to create self-sufficiency; asset building is also critical. Unfortunately, the State's continued use of the asset test, which considers a household's savings and other non-liquid capital, denies access to the supplemental nutrition assistance program for many in need and encourages behaviors that are contrary to those required to achieve financial stability. Maximizing earnings and saving for the future are qualities we encourage, yet the State's standards penalize those who attempt to achieve this.

Statistics from Aloha United Way's 211 information and referral service show a 66 percent increase in requests for food pantries, an indication of our community's growing food insecurity. Easing of the eligibility requirements for the supplemental nutrition program would help Hawaii's residents rebound and move toward financial independence. At the same time, it would bring in millions of federal dollars in benefits during a time when they are most needed.

Aloha United Way thanks you for the opportunity to testify and we encourage favorable consideration of SB 1668.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Doyle
President & Chief Professional Officer

2970 Kalaheo Street, Suite 203
Lihue, Hawaii 96766
Phone: 808,245,5014
Fax: 808,245,8040
E-mail: info@childandfamily.org
www.childandfamily.org



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert Fujioka
CHAIR

Shelley B. Thompson
PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR

Kathy Inouye
SENIOR VICE CHAIR

General (Ret.) Dwight Keahala
SECRETARY

Mark Yamakawa
TREASURER

Howard S. Goyal
PRESIDENT ELECT

Stephanie Ackerman
Carol Al May
John L. Aronson
Kyle Chock
Paul Diego
Stanley Hone
Tim Johns
Anton Knucky
Lori Lum

Stephen MacMillan
Gayle Marinoni
Lynn McCann
Steve Meyer
Lisa Parrish
Tim Selesch
Jeanne Shibusaki
Earl Stoner
Rann Wainomull
Neal Yokota
Hori Zai

ACCREDITATION

Council on Accreditation
AFFILIATIONS

Alliance for Children
and Families

International Forum for
Child Welfare

Alaka United Way

Hawaii Island United Way

Maui United Way



Kauai United Way

February 9, 2009

**Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair of Human Services Committee**

LATE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL # SB1668

Dear Senator Chun Oakland,

Nana's House and Hale Ho'omaiu, family centers of Child and Family Service distribute food weekly to Kauai's low income and homeless. We have recently seen significant increases in the demand for food and our services.

We secure food from the food bank and distribute to our families weekly, but this alone cannot fully satisfy the hunger needs of our community. Food Stamps/SNAP(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); however, holds an important key to eliminate hunger on our Island.

We are in support of Senate Bill SB1668 to expand "categorical eligibility" and eliminate the need for an asset test to determine SNAP eligibility. On a bipartisan basis, the U.S. Congress has agreed that asset development is important to help low income Americans transition out of poverty. Accumulating assets clearly allows low income households to mitigate material hardships during periods of unemployment or illness; suffer less of a decline in their living standard during retirement; or make investments in their own education or housing that increase their financial stability. Moreover, Hawaii's current system severely penalizes our kupuna, in particular, for their thrifty saving habits.

Our Mission: Strengthening Families and Fostering the Healthy Development of Children

We support this bill as we feel it will help to stimulate the current economy and feed the hungry people of Hawaii.

If this Bill becomes law, State SNAP workers would no longer have to research, confirm, verify, and conduct interviews on "assets". There will be State savings in worker time and energy to qualify eligible people for food stamps. Currently, 15 States have no asset tests in determining the eligibility of SNAP participation.

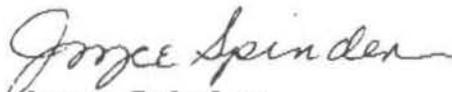
We also support raising the gross income guidelines from the current 130% to 185% of poverty for SNAP eligibility, which occurs in tandem with expanded categorical eligibility.

Also, the current 11 page SNAP application is much too long; is overwhelming for many people; and deters them from applying for benefits for which they may be eligible. We support shortening the SNAP application to no more than four pages, as other states have already done.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this important change to Hawaii's SNAP program, which will greatly benefit the people of Hawaii.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 652-9272.

Sincerely,



Joyce Spinden

Program Director

Hale Ho'omalua - East side Kauai

Nana's House - West side Kauai



Opportunities to Begin Again

Dr. Merrily Worrell, PSM – MHK – Kauai
3205 Akahi St.
Lihue, HI 96766

LATE

2-6-09

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair – Human Services Committee

Dear Senator,

Mental Health Kokua services on Kauai include residential services, as well as Homeless Outreach services for folks on Kauai with mental health issues. We secure some food from the food bank to supplement these services. "Food Stamps" are also an important element for many people on Kauai who are struggling.

In these difficult economic times, we support legislation to expand the amount of federal food dollars available to Hawaii's needy people. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) estimates that every additional \$5 of food stamp benefits can generate \$9.20 in total economic activity.¹ We support this bill as we feel it will help to stimulate the current economy and feed the hungry people of Hawaii.

We are in support of Senate Bill SB1668 to expand "categorical eligibility" and eliminate the need for an asset test to determine SNAP eligibility. On a bipartisan basis, the U.S. Congress has agreed that asset development is important to help low income Americans transition out of poverty. Accumulating assets clearly allows low income households to mitigate material hardships during periods of unemployment or illness; suffer less of a decline in their living standard during retirement; or make investments in their own education or housing that increase their financial stability. Moreover, Hawaii's current system severely penalizes our kupuna, in particular, for their thrifty saving habits.

If this Bill becomes law, State SNAP workers would no longer have to research, confirm, verify, and conduct interviews on "assets". There will be State savings in worker time and energy to qualify eligible people for food stamps. Currently, 15 States have no asset tests in determining the eligibility of SNAP participation.

We also support raising the gross income guidelines from the current 130% to 185% of poverty for SNAP eligibility, which occurs in tandem with expanded categorical eligibility.

Also, the current 11 page SNAP application is much too long and is overwhelming for many people. This deters them from applying for benefits for which they may be eligible. We



Phone (808) 737-2523

A non-profit organization

Main Administrative Office
1221 Kapiolani Boulevard, #345
Honolulu, HI 96814

Fax (808) 734-1208

Kauai Administrative Office
3205 Akahi Street
Lihue, HI 96766

Phone (808) 632-0466



Fax (808) 632-0866

support shortening the SNAP application to no more than four pages, as other states have already done.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this important change to Hawaii's SNAP program, which will greatly benefit the people of Hawaii.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 808-632-0466

Sincerely,


Merrily Worrell, PSM - Kauai

¹ Hanson, Kenneth, E. Golan. *Effects of Changes in Food Stamp Expenditures across the U.S. Economy*. USDA/ERS, August 2002.

HACBED

Community Voice, Collective Action

Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development
677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 702 Honolulu, HI 96813
Ph. 808.550.2661 Fax 808.534.1199
Email info@hacbed.org www.hacbed.org

Board Members

President

Jason Okuhama (*at large*)
Managing Partner,
Commercial & Business
Lending

Vice President

Akoni Akana (*Maui*)
Executive Director,
Friends of Moku'ula

Secretary

Rian Dubach (*at large*)
Community Development &
CRA Manager
American Savings Bank

Treasurer

Wayne Tanna (*at large*)
Asset Building Coalition &
Chaminade University

Kipukai Kualii (*Kaua'i*)
Anahola Kaua'i Agribusiness
Microenterprise Project

Stacy Crivello (*Moloka'i*)
President
Ke Aupuni Lokahi

Puni Kekauoha &
Adrienne Dillard (*O'ahu*)
Papakolea CDC

Keikialoha Kekipi &
Susie Osborne (*Hawai'i*)
Ho'oulu Lahui/ Kua O Ka La
Public Charter School

Kukui & Gary Maunakea-Forth
(*O'ahu*)
WCRC/Mala Ai 'Opio (MA'O)

Tommy Otake (*at large*)
Attorney At Law

HACBED Staff

Robert Agres, Jr
Executive Director

Brent Dillabaugh
Asset Policy Coordinator

Larissa Meinecke
Asset Policy Associate

John Higgins
Capacity Building Associate

Hanale Vincent
Planning & Research Associate

Briana Monroe
Program Support Assistant

Joonghee Park
Planning & Research Assistant

LATE

Tuesday, February 10, 2009 2:15pm
Senate Committee on Human Services Rm.016
Testimony **Supporting the Intent of SB 1668**
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Dear Chair Chun-Oakland and Committee Members:

The Hawai'i Alliance for Community Based Economic Development (HACBED) is submitting testimony supporting the intent of **SB 1668**.

Firstly, HACBED would like to commend the Department of Human Services (DHS) in their continued efforts to make assistance more accessible to community members by:

- Expanding SNAP requirements to allow for "categorical eligibility"
- Raising eligibility of the program from individuals who are at 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 185% of the FPL

The SNAP participation rate in Hawai'i hovers around 72%. That means 28% of Hawai'i residents who qualify and need food assistance are not being served. We fully support the intent of SB1668 which would raise the asset limits for qualifiers and make the application process easier. Thus providing greater access to Hawai'i's under served families.

While HACBED supports these measures, we are aware that certain components of **SB1668** are too prescriptive and may not pass federal muster. Nonetheless, in these dire economic times HACBED firmly believes that increasing access to SNAP would not only benefit needy families, but provide much needed stimulus to the state economy.

Thank you the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Brent Dillabaugh
Policy Coordinator

Church of the Pacific



*Church of the Pacific, P.O. Box 223154, Princeville HI 96722 * Office 808 826-6481
Glenn Frazier, Pastor*

February 4, 2009

LATE

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair of Human Services Committee

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL #SB1668

Dear Senator Chun Oakland,

At the Church of the Pacific, Princeville, Kauai, Hawaii, we have held a weekly food pantry since 2002 to assist the people on the North Shore of Kauai who are in need of food. In the past four months, we have seen a drastic increase in the numbers of people who are in need. Food is received by 100 to 120 people, individuals and families, each distribution day.

Our major source of food is the Kauai Food Bank, but there is just not enough food to supply all of the needs on this island. We are so pleased that the Food Stamp/SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); was introduced to the people who come to our location. It is with great hope that this program will help to relieve some of the hunger on Kauai.

We wish to support legislation to expand the amount of federal food dollars available to Hawaii's needy people. USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that every additional \$5 of food stamp benefits can generate \$9.20 in total economic activity. We support this bill with the hope that it will help stimulate the current economy and feed the hungry people of Hawaii.

We are in support of Senate Bill SB1668 to expand "categorical eligibility" and eliminate the need for an asset test to determine SNAP eligibility. The U.S. Congress has agreed that asset development is important to help low income Americans transition out of poverty. Accumulating assets is an important personal self esteem builder, it gives the individual or family a feeling of security should there be a period of illness or unemployment. On Kauai, we see elderly people who have property, but not the cash

flow to purchase medicine and food. Why should these people have to sell their homes just to receive food assistance?

Currently, 15 states have no asset tests in determining the eligibility of SNAP participation. Our State could experience a savings if the SNAP workers would no longer have to research, confirm, verify and conduct interviews on "assets".

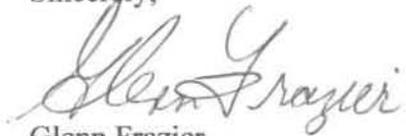
We also support raising the gross income guidelines from the current 130% to 185% of poverty for SNAP eligibility, which occurs in tandem with expanded categorical eligibility.

It seems that the current 11 page SNAP application is much too long and is overwhelming for many individuals. This often scares them from applying for benefits for which they may be eligible. Some other states have already shortened the SNAP application.

The changes as proposed in Senate Bill #SB1668 will greatly benefit the people of Hawaii. We share our appreciation to you for taking the time to give attention to these important changes.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 808-634-0041.

Sincerely,



Glenn Frazier
Pastor, Church of the Pacific
United Church of Christ

Kauai Health Career Training

"Caring is our Business"

February 4, 2009

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland

Chair of Human Services Committee

LATE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL # SB1668

Dear Senator Chun Oakland,

We are a non-profit agency that feeds the needy on Hawaii and we have recently seen significant increases in the demand for our services. We feed and care for 75-80 clients a month.

We secure food from the food bank and distribute to our needy families but this alone can not fully satisfy the hunger needs of our community. Food Stamps/SNAP(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); however, holds an important key to eliminate hunger on our island.

In these difficult economic times, we support legislation to expand the amount of federal food dollars available to Hawaii's needy people. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) estimates that every additional \$5 of food stamp benefits can generate \$9.20 in total economic activity.¹ We support this bill as we feel it will help to stimulate the current economy and feed the hungry people of Hawaii.

We are in support of Senate Bill SB1668 to expand "categorical eligibility" and eliminate the need for an asset test to determine SNAP eligibility. On a bipartisan basis, the U.S. Congress has agreed that asset development is important to help low income Americans transition out of poverty. Accumulating assets clearly allows low income households to mitigate material hardships during periods of unemployment

Kauai Health Career Training

"Caring is our Business"

or illness; suffer less of a decline in their living standard during retirement; or make investments in their own education or housing that increase their financial stability. Moreover, Hawaii's current system severely penalizes our kupuna, in particular, for their thrifty saving habits.

If this Bill becomes law, State SNAP workers would no longer have to research, confirm, verify, and conduct interviews on "assets". There will be State savings in worker time and energy to qualify eligible people for food stamps. Currently, 15 States have no asset tests in determining the eligibility of SNAP participation.

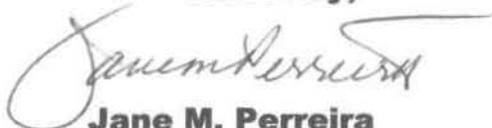
We also support raising the gross income guidelines from the current 130% to 185% of poverty for SNAP eligibility, which occurs in tandem with expanded categorical eligibility.

Also, the current 11 page SNAP application is much too long and is overwhelming for many people. This deters them from applying for benefits for which they may be eligible. We support shortening the SNAP application to no more than four pages, as other states have already done.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this important change to Hawaii's SNAP program, which will greatly benefit the people of Hawaii.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 246-1115.

Sincerely,



Jane M. Perreira

Office Coordinator/Kauai Health Career Training dba/ Timao Health Services

Hope, Help and Healing Kaua'i

P.O. Box 662227, Lihue, HI 96766
Phone (808) 245-3740
office@hhhk.org
www.hhhk.org

LATE

February 3, 2009

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair of Human Services Committee

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL # SB1668

Dear Senator Chun Oakland,

Hope, Help and Healing Kauai is a 501 (c) 3 faith based non-profit who offers transitional housing to clients previously incarcerated due to substance abuse issues. There is a huge increase in demand for our services and most of our clients are in need of basic necessities like food and water. Many of our clients secure some of their food from the food bank.

Kauai Food Bank and Food Stamps/SNAP(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); however, holds an important key to eliminate hunger on our island.

In these difficult economic times, we support legislation to expand the amount of federal food dollars available to Hawaii's needy people. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) estimates that every additional \$5 of food stamp benefits can generate \$9.20 in total economic activity.¹ We support this bill as we feel it will help to stimulate the current economy and feed the hungry people of Hawaii.

We are in support of Senate Bill SB1668 to expand "categorical eligibility" and eliminate the need for an asset test to determine SNAP eligibility. On a bipartisan basis, the U.S. Congress has agreed that asset development is important to help low income Americans transition out of poverty. Accumulating assets clearly allows low income households to

Hope, Help and Healing Kauai is a section 501(c) (3) tax exempt non-profit organization.
Tax ID #20-3420885. All donations are tax deductible as provided by law.

mitigate material hardships during periods of unemployment or illness; suffer less of a decline in their living standard during retirement; or make investments in their own education or housing that increase their financial stability. Moreover, Hawaii's current system severely penalizes our kupuna, in particular, for their thrifty saving habits.

If this Bill becomes law, State SNAP workers would no longer have to research, confirm, verify, and conduct interviews on "assets". There will be State savings in worker time and energy to qualify eligible people for food stamps. Currently, 15 States have no asset tests in determining the eligibility of SNAP participation.

We also support raising the gross income guidelines from the current 130% to 185% of poverty for SNAP eligibility, which occurs in tandem with expanded categorical eligibility.

Also, the current 11 page SNAP application is much too long and is overwhelming for many people. This deters them from applying for benefits for which they may be eligible. We support shortening the SNAP application to no more than four pages, as other states have already done.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this important change to Hawaii's SNAP program, which will greatly benefit the people of Hawaii.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 808-245-3740.

Sincerely,



Tina Albao
Administrator

¹Hanson, Kenneth, E. Golan. *Effects of Changes in Food Stamp Expenditures across the U.S. Economy*. USDA/ERS, August 2002.

February 12, 2009

LATE

**Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair of Human Services Committee**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL # SB1668

Dear Senator Chun Oakland,

I attended and testified at the February 10th hearing for this bill. I wish to contest some of the testimony given by Legal Aid and Department of Human Services.

Legal Aid stated that the Federal Government sets the income guideline at 130% of poverty and that could not be changed. This is definitely not correct. The Federal Government sets the “Net” to be at or below 100% of the poverty guideline to receive SNAP benefits; however, each state can set their income guidelines. The state of Washington changed to 200%; Vermont changed to 199%; and several states have changed their income guidelines to 185%.

In the memorandum submitted by Lillian Koller, Director of Department of Human Services, she states that the “comprehensive application form makes sure clients receive all the benefits they’re entitled to, including SNAP, cash assistance, child care, low income household energy assistance (LIHEAP), and Medicaid.” I have confirmed with our local DHS office that this comprehensive application does not give clients benefits for child care or low income household energy assistance (LIHEAP).

In addition, this memorandum stated that “Face-to-face interviews with a merit employee are a federal requirement of SNAP as a way of reducing fraud.” During my testimony I read and submitted a copy of a document dated October 28, 2008 from USDA stating that “Data submitted by State agencies in recent years does not indicate that telephone interviews

negatively affect payment error rates. Additionally, as low-income households are being severely impacted by the rising cost of transportation, waiving the face-to-face interview for a State's entire caseload at initial certification could significantly improve the ability of households to complete the application process. For these reasons, we are removing the 50 percent limit on face-to-face waivers. State agencies that currently have approved waivers of the hardship documentation requirement at initial certification may immediately begin to apply that waiver to their entire caseload."

Thank you for your timely consideration of this important change to Hawaii's SNAP program, which will greatly benefit the people of Hawaii.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (808) 246-3809.

Sincerely,

**Wendy Rusaw
Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator
Kauai Food Bank
3285 Waapa Road
Lihue, HI 96766**



OCT 28 2008

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Subject: Amendment of Face-to-Face Interview Waiver Criteria

Food and
Nutrition
Service

To: All Regional Directors
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

3101 Park
Center Drive

This is to advise you that we are amending our criteria for the approval of waivers of the requirement to document household hardship in the household's case file when the eligibility worker waives the face-to-face interview in favor of a telephone interview at initial certification. On August 24, 2007, we advised Regional Offices that State agencies must limit their waivers of documentation of face-to-face interview waivers at initial certification to no more than 50 percent of their caseload. We imposed the 50 percent limit because we were unsure of the payment accuracy consequences of substituting a telephone interview for the face-to-face interview at initial certification.

Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

However, data submitted by State agencies in recent years does not indicate that telephone interviews negatively affect payment error rates. Additionally, as low-income households are being severely impacted by the rising cost of transportation, waiving the face-to-face interview for a State's entire caseload at initial certification could significantly improve the ability of households to complete the application process.

For these reasons, we are removing the 50 percent limit on face-to-face waivers. State agencies that currently have approved waivers of the hardship documentation requirement at initial certification may immediately begin to apply that waiver to their entire caseload. From this point forward any approved waivers of the documentation requirement at initial interviews and recertifications will be applicable on a statewide basis.

All waivers of the face-to-face interview will now be subject to only the following conditions:

- The State agency must be able to identify waiver cases in connection with the Quality Control (QC) review process;
- The State agency must be able to code whether a case reviewed in QC was last interviewed face-to-face or by telephone;
- The State agency must grant a face-to-face interview if the household or its authorized representative asks for one.

If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Daigle Katz of my staff by email or by telephone at (415) 705-1323, ext. 304.

Arthur T. Foley
Director
Program Development Division

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Tuesday, October 28, 2008.tif



**Hui O Mana Ka Pu'uwai
Outrigger Canoe Club**

6590 Pu'upilo Rd. # A
Kapaa, Kauai, Hawaii 96746
808 635-6311

LATE

February 3, 2009
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair of Human Services Committee

Dear Senator Chun Oakland,

We are a non-profit agency that feeds the needy on Hawaii and we have recently seen significant increases in the demand for our services.

We secure food from the food bank and distribute to our needy families but this alone can not fully satisfy the hunger needs of our community. Food Stamps/SNAP(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); however, holds an important key to eliminate hunger on our island.

In these difficult economic times, we support legislation to expand the amount of federal food dollars available to Hawaii's needy people. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) estimates that every additional \$5 of food stamp benefits can generate \$9.20 in total economic activity.¹ We support this bill as we feel it will help to stimulate the current economy and feed the hungry people of Hawaii.

We are in support of Senate Bill SB1668 to expand "categorical eligibility" and eliminate the need for an asset test to determine SNAP eligibility. On a bipartisan basis, the U.S. Congress has agreed that asset development is important to help low income Americans transition out of poverty. Accumulating assets clearly allows low income households to mitigate material hardships during periods of unemployment or illness; suffer less of a decline in their living standard during retirement; or make investments in their own education or housing that increase their financial stability. Moreover, Hawaii's current system severely penalizes our kupuna, in particular, for their thrifty saving habits.

If this Bill becomes law, State SNAP workers would no longer have to research, confirm, verify, and conduct interviews on "assets". There will be State savings in worker time and energy to qualify eligible people for food stamps. Currently, 15 States have no asset tests in determining the eligibility of SNAP participation.

We also support raising the gross income guidelines from the current 130% to 185% of poverty for SNAP eligibility, which occurs in tandem with expanded categorical eligibility.

Also, the current 11 page SNAP application is much too long and is overwhelming for many people. This deters them from applying for benefits for which they may be eligible. We support shortening the SNAP application to no more than four pages, as other states have already done.

Brian R. Curll

Brian R Curll, President
Federal ID 501 © (3) # 99-0285770
Public Charity: 509(a)(1), 170(b)(1)(A)(VI)
Hawaii Tax ID# W-404 38 462

¹ Hanson, Kenneth, E. Golan. *Effects of Changes in Food Stamp Expenditures across the U.S. Economy.* USDA/ERS, August 2002. free



SENATOR SUZANNE CHUN OAKLAND
CHAIR OF HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

LATE

TOM WILLIAMS
PRES. - O.K.K.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL #SB/668

Dear senator chun oakland,

february 7, 2009

The O.K.K. is a non-profit agency that helps to feed the hungry here on the north shore of KAUAI, and recently we have seen a huge increase in the need for our services. The O.K.K. obtains the KAUAI FOOD BANK food regularly and gives it out freely to needy persons and families. However, that alone does not fully satisfy the hunger needs of our community. The important key to solve that problem is the FOOD STAMP/SNAP (supplemental nutrition assistance program) program.

According to KENNETH HANSON & E. GOLAN (EFFECTS OF CHANGES IN FOOD STAMP EXPENDITURES ACROSS THE U.S. ECONOMY, USDA/ERS, AUG. 2002), every additional \$5⁰⁰ of food stamp benefits can generate an estimated \$9.20 in total economic activity. Thus, we feel that by expanding the amount of federal dollars available to Hawaii's needy people, this bill will help to stimulate the economy and to feed our hungry people. Therefore, the O.K.K. fully supports SENATE BILL SB/668, especially in these difficult economic times.

The O.K.K. is in support of this bill to expand "categorical eligibility" and to eliminate the need for an asset test to determine SNAP eligibility. On a bipartisan basis, the congress has agreed that asset development is important to help low income americans to transition out of poverty. Accumulating assets clearly allows low income households to mitigate material hardships during periods of unemployment or illness; to suffer less of a decline in

-2-



their living standard during retirement; or to make investments in their own education or housing that increase their financial stability. moreover, hawaii's current system severely penalizes our kupuna, in particular, for their thrifty saving habits.

when SB1668 becomes law, state SNAP workers no longer will have to research, to confirm, to verify, and to conduct interviews on "assets." there will be state savings in worker time and energy to qualify eligible persons for food stamps. currently, 15 states have NO asset tests in determining the eligibility of SNAP participation.

the O.K.K. also supports raising the gross income guidelines from the current 130% to 185% of poverty for SNAP eligibility, which occurs in tandem with expanded categorical eligibility.

also, the current 11-page SNAP application is much too long and is overwhelming for many persons. that significantly deters them from applying for the benefits for which they may be eligible. we strongly support shortening the SNAP application to no more than four pages, as other states already have done.

much mahalo to you, senator chun, for your timely consideration of this important change to hawaii's SNAP program — which will greatly benefit the people of hawaii if you have any questions, please call me at 826-1631.

D + aloha
Tom



KALAEHO

February 9, 2009

**Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair of Human Services Committee**

LATE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL # SB1668

Dear Senator Chun Oakland,

We are a non-profit agency that feeds the needy on Hawaii and we have recently seen significant increases in the demand for our services.

We secure food from the food bank and distribute to our needy families but this alone can not fully satisfy the hunger needs of our community. Food Stamps/SNAP(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); however, holds an important key to eliminate hunger on our island.

In these difficult economic times, we support legislation to expand the amount of federal food dollars available to Hawaii's needy people. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) estimates that every additional \$5 of food stamp benefits can generate \$9.20 in total economic activity.¹ We support this bill as we feel it will help to stimulate the current economy and feed the hungry people of Hawaii.

We are in support of Senate Bill SB1668 to expand "categorical eligibility" and eliminate the need for an asset test to determine SNAP eligibility. On a bipartisan basis, the U.S. Congress has agreed that asset development is important to help low income Americans transition out of poverty. Accumulating assets clearly allows low income households to mitigate material hardships during periods of unemployment

or illness; suffer less of a decline in their living standard during retirement; or make investments in their own education or housing that increase their financial stability. Moreover, Hawaii's current system severely penalizes our kupuna, in particular, for their thrifty saving habits.

If this Bill becomes law, State SNAP workers would no longer have to research, confirm, verify, and conduct interviews on "assets". There will be State savings in worker time and energy to qualify eligible people for food stamps. Currently, 15 States have no asset tests in determining the eligibility of SNAP participation.

We also support raising the gross income guidelines from the current 130% to 185% of poverty for SNAP eligibility, which occurs in tandem with expanded categorical eligibility.

Also, the current 11 page SNAP application is much too long and is overwhelming for many people. This deters them from applying for benefits for which they may be eligible. We support shortening the SNAP application to no more than four pages, as other states have already done.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this important change to Hawaii's SNAP program, which will greatly benefit the people of Hawaii.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 332-9916.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Hanson', written over a horizontal line.

¹ Hanson, Kenneth, E. Golan. *Effects of Changes in Food Stamp Expenditures across the U.S. Economy*. USDA/ERS, August 2002.