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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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





# H.B. NO. 740

**Report Title:**

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

**Description:**

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

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

