



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/02/2024

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 3091 MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR FOOD SERVICES.

Purpose of Bill: Makes an emergency appropriation to provide moneys for the Department of Education for its food service operations.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports SB 3091 which is part of its administrative package.

The Department's School Food Services Branch (SFSB) has a projected shortfall of \$20 million for fiscal year 2024. Several major factors have contributed to the current budget shortfall, including high inflation of the price of goods, relatively static federal meal reimbursement, and unchanged school meal price rates.

Inflation throughout and following the pandemic has been the largest factor driving the SFSB's budget shortfall. In school year 2018-2019, the year immediately preceding the pandemic, food and milk costs were \$40.4 million or 35% of the program's overall cost. In school year 2022-2023, food and milk costs had grown to \$67.1 million, making up 48% of the program's total cost.

The Department is very appreciative of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) efforts to increase reimbursement rates in the past few years. However, the current meal pricing and federal reimbursement rates have been insufficient to cover cost increases experienced by the SFSB. The Department is aware that the USDA will conduct a school meal cost study for the Department in school year 2024-2025 to consider Hawaii for a higher reimbursement rate.

Providing nutritious meals to students is a critical part of the growth and development of Hawaii's keiki and is an investment in their future and for the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education
Friday, February 2, 2024; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
Via Videoconference**

**RE: SENATE BILL NO. 3091 – MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR FOOD SERVICES.**

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 3091, MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR FOOD SERVICES.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate \$20 million in general funds for fiscal year 2023-2024 to cover the fiscal deficit experienced in food service operations.

For many of Hawaii's families, the only consistent source of food for our children has been the meals provided at the public schools.

According to the Department of Education, it accumulated a deficit of over \$20 million for its school food service operations because of inflationary cost increases. In school year 2022-2023, more than 80 percent of the Department's food costs increased by 42 percent, resulting in the need for additional funds.

Hawaii's underprivileged and rural communities are extremely vulnerable to changing economic conditions. With inflation on the rise, entire families are struggling to put food on the table on a consistent basis. All one needs to do is visit various food distribution events and see the large number of people who wait to receive surplus food.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 3091
Friday, February 2, 2024; 3:00 p.m.
Page 2

For this reason, the HPCA supports this bill and urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

SB-3091

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 5:08:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Something is very wrong here and the Hawai'i School Food Services purchasing needs to be reevaluated and rethought. If DOE's SFBS continues to purchase processed or single serving foods, instead of moving toward scratch cooking in school kitchens with whole foods these costs will continue to rise. This of course would need to be accompanied by professional development for school kitchen staff, innovative recipe development, purchasing locally grown products when possible, and commitment by the State for an update of the School Food system.

I think this emergency appropriation needs to be accompanied by certain stipulations that allow SFBS to rethink their purchasing and their entire food system. It is daunting, but necessary.

FINAL

Aloha My name is Kelly Olayan and I have 4 keiki who are all in the DOE school system. I'm reaching out to you today to give a perspective into the quality of the school lunches that are being served. I'm tired of paying full price (\$2.50/day) for each of my children to be served garbage to fill their tummies while the schools expect them to perform at 100g all the time to get the funding they need. We do not qualify for free or reduced lunch (on 1 income) so I pay full price for 4 students, 3 at Heeia Elementary and 1 at Castle high school (est \$250/month). An extra lunch is \$5.50.

Attached are photos of some breakfast & lunches being served from Castle high school as my elementary school children cannot take phones to school. but upon asking them, they are all served the same quantity and same exact meals.

Here are my concerns:

1. Quality is poor, very poor. our children deserve better quality food. perhaps something similar to what they are served at home so there is less food waste and more full tummies. children perform poor when they are hungry and if our schools are riding on funding for their student test scores for their SBA tests, then they should put an effort forward to feeding their students better quality food. much better quality.
2. quantity: why are high school students being served the same amount of food as elementary school students?
3. selection: why are the menus repeated over and over again throughout the entire school year? why don't these keiki have an option for an alternative lunch such as a cold sandwich or salad? I know that if my child was served an option of a cold cut sandwich over these hot meals, they wouldn't come home hungry, let me rephrase that: STARVING every day!
4. Evaluation. Who evaluates the waste vs consumption?

Say if on the days children were served fish sticks, they get 70% waste verses a day they were served nuggets and they get 20% waste, why continue to serve the same fishsticks over & over again? Have the children been asked/surveyed on meals they prefer? and if they were, has these statistics been taken into consideration?

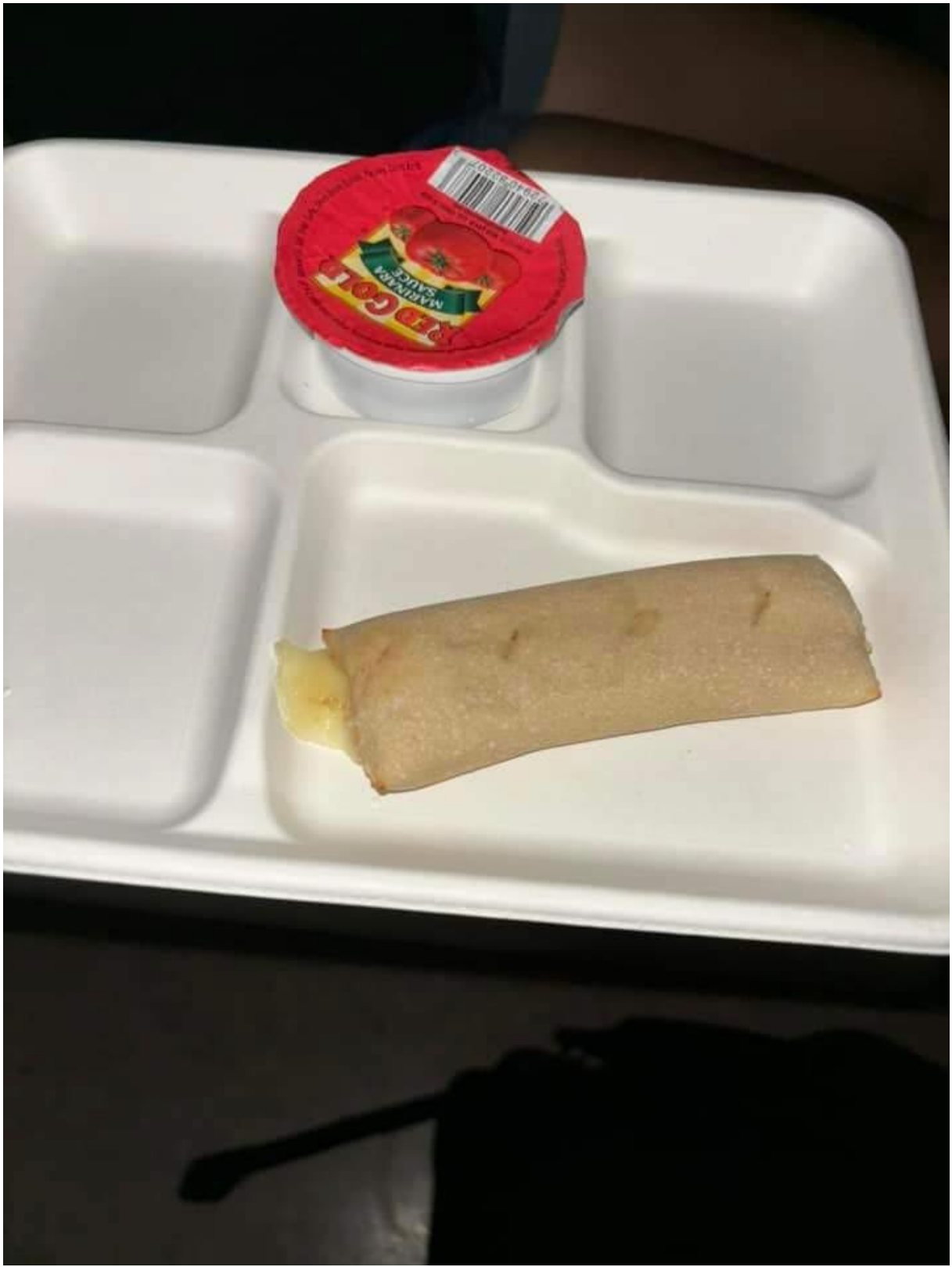
5. Distribution: If YHATA distributes all DOE food but is also distributing high quality foods to high end restraunts, why are our children last on the list when it comes to quality of food served? in my honest opinion, our inmates get served better quality foods then our children. They deserve better. Maybe finding a new committee to put together a menu for our children would be best, do the people on this committee have children in the school system and understand THIS is what's being served? Maybe we should look at a new venue for a distributor that can deliver quality foods.

6. Nutrition. I'm not sure who came in last and evaluated our nutrition requirements for the DOE but im 100% sure they do not have children who eat these meals being served. I believe our nutrition evaluation needs to be re-evaluated.

Thanks for taking the time to review this email as I initially contacted action line and was told to email directly. I've been in contact with both of my children's schools as well as the school food services for the windward district. I believe parents should have access to these photos and know what our keiki are being served. they deserve better. the out cry for better food is unfathomable amongst parents but no one has spoke out about the matter and im not about to be quite about it any longer. Mahalo for your time





















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Total 20mg	40%		

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LATE

SB-3091

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 8:58:02 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Melody Young	Testifying for CARES	Support	In Person

Comments:

CARES testifies in strong support.