

JAN 20 2023

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that accessing fresh,
2 diverse, nutritious, healthy food on a weekly basis is a
3 significant challenge for many individuals and families in the
4 State. According to Feeding America, a nonprofit network of
5 over two hundred food banks nationwide, there has been a fifty-
6 one per cent increase in the number of families experiencing
7 food insecurity in the State since 2019. A 2021 study by the
8 University of Hawaii found that forty-eight per cent of Hawaii's
9 families with children report food insecurity. Hawaii Foodbank
10 also reported that, in 2021, one out of every four children in
11 the State were at risk of going hungry. It is estimated that
12 more than eighty thousand children in the State will struggle
13 with hunger this year.

14 Providing weekly access to healthy food also is critical to
15 the disabled, kupuna (elderly), ALICE (Asset Limited, Income
16 Constrained, Employed), and veteran populations who are impacted
17 by food insecurity. Access to healthy food options on a weekly



1 basis also will improve the health of the State's population
2 that is impacted by heart disease and diabetes.

3 The legislature further finds that food insecurity levels
4 remain elevated after the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic
5 period. Food pantries and food banks provide a safety net for
6 local families facing ongoing food insecurity caused by natural
7 disasters, economic pressures, inflation, or the high cost of
8 living in the State. According to Feeding Hawai'i Together, dba
9 The Pantry by Feeding Hawaii Together (The Pantry), the only
10 free e-commerce food pantry and the only year-round food
11 distribution site in the State, the frequent distribution of
12 food ensures that those who are food insecure do not go hungry.

13 Nonprofit food distributors, such as The Pantry are funded
14 through donations, purchases, and federal programs. However,
15 food purchasing costs have increased twenty-five per cent in the
16 past three years, exacerbating an already existing structural
17 issue of food insecurity in the State's most vulnerable
18 populations. As food costs have increased for individuals and
19 families, food pantries and food banks have also experienced
20 such increases, along with growing demand and supply chain
21 issues.



1 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
2 funds to contract with service providers for the purchase,
3 storage, and operational costs of food distribution to Hawaii
4 families.

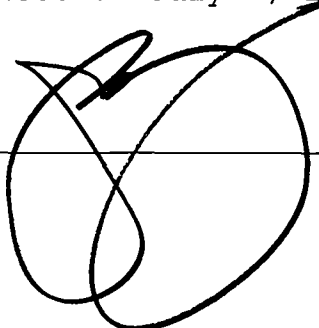
5 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
7 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
8 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
9 year 2024-2025 to contract with service providers for the
10 purchase, storage, and operational costs of food of food
11 distribution in the State; provided that a maximum of fifteen
12 per cent of the total sum may be expended on administrative
13 costs.

14 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the office of
15 community services for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

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INTRODUCED BY: _____

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S.B. NO. 461

Report Title:

Food Security; Office of Community Services; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the purchase, storage, and operational costs of food distribution in the State.

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