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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ECONOMIC RESEARCH  
ORGANIZATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF WAYS TO INCREASE ACCESS  
TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BENEFITS.

1 WHEREAS, many low-income households struggle to purchase  
2 food due to Hawaii's high cost of living and food prices; and  
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4 WHEREAS, more than one in six residents experience food  
5 insecurity; and  
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7 WHEREAS, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
8 (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program, is crucial in  
9 providing food assistance to some of Hawaii's most economically  
10 disadvantaged residents; and  
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12 WHEREAS, households with incomes that are two hundred  
13 percent above the federal poverty level are ineligible for SNAP;  
14 and  
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16 WHEREAS, the 2023 United For ALICE (Asset Limited, Income  
17 Constrained, Employed) report highlighted that a family of four  
18 with a household income of \$69,000 per year is ineligible for  
19 SNAP benefits but needs an income of over \$100,000 per year to  
20 meet basic needs, including food and housing; and  
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22 WHEREAS, if the same family earned just \$1,000 less per  
23 year, or \$68,000, the family would be eligible to receive more  
24 than \$9,000 in SNAP benefits; and  
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26 WHEREAS, the two hundred percent poverty level income  
27 eligibility cutoff for SNAP assistance creates a benefits cliff  
28 that disincentivizes individuals from reaching their greatest  
29 earning potential; and  
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# S.C.R. NO. 21

1           WHEREAS, many families just below SNAP's income eligibility  
2 threshold decline pay increases because the financial benefit of  
3 increased economic opportunities does not exceed the potential  
4 cost of losing SNAP benefits; and

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6           WHEREAS, SNAP is a highly effective anti-hunger initiative  
7 throughout the country; in Hawaii, SNAP supports over one  
8 hundred thirty thousand individuals and brings more than  
9 \$630,000,000 into the State's economy each year; and

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11           WHEREAS, many families with incomes below the two hundred  
12 percent poverty level are ineligible for SNAP benefits for other  
13 reasons, such as citizenship status or education level; and

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15           WHEREAS, many families who are eligible for SNAP are not  
16 enrolled; and

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18           WHEREAS, addressing the problem posed by the SNAP benefits  
19 cliff would help economically vulnerable households meet their  
20 basic needs without limiting their earning potential; now,  
21 therefore,

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23           BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second  
24 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, the  
25 House of Representatives concurring, that the University of  
26 Hawaii Economic Research Organization is requested to conduct a  
27 study of ways to increase access to Supplemental Nutrition  
28 Assistance Program benefits; and

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30           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study is requested to  
31 include:

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33           (1) Public policy options for addressing the benefits  
34 cliff created by SNAP's eligibility requirements,  
35 including a cost-benefit analysis of expanding  
36 eligibility to households that are three hundred  
37 percent above the federal poverty level;

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39           (2) An estimate of the number of Hawaii residents whose  
40 income is below the three hundred percent federal  
41 poverty level and who may become eligible for SNAP



# S.C.R. NO. 21

1 benefits if the State expands income eligibility to  
2 this level;

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4 (3) An estimate of the number of residents who are  
5 currently eligible for SNAP, but not enrolled; and  
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7 (4) Other issues that the University of Hawaii Economic  
8 Research Organization determines to be important in  
9 increasing access to SNAP benefits; and  
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Hawaii  
12 Economic Research Organization is requested to submit a report  
13 of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
14 legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior  
15 to the convening of the Regular Session of 2025; and  
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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
18 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Lieutenant  
19 Governor, Director of Human Services, and Executive Director of  
20 the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization.  
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OFFERED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

