

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 121

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 10 2025

RE: S.B. No. 960
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 960 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rates, including establishing additional positions.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Farmers Union United; Hawai'i Public Health Institute; Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice; Hawaii Food Industry Association; Green Party of Hawai'i; Hawai'i Primary Care Association; AAUW of Hawaii; Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition; Hawaii Food Bank, Inc.; Chamber of Sustainable Commerce; Aloha United Way, Inc.; AlohaCare; Catholic Charities Hawai'i; Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action; Strata Farms LLC; Hawai'i Hunger Action Network; and thirty individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services.

Your Committee finds that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp



program, is crucial to providing necessary food assistance to some of Hawaii's most economically disadvantaged residents. Your Committee further finds that SNAP access and participation rates are hampered by understaffing at the Department of Human Services and that improvements to SNAP in the State, including elimination of the net income limit eligibility criteria, will only be effective if they are able to be fully implemented, which will require additional staffing for the Department of Human Services. This measure addresses the Department of Human Services' financial and staffing barriers to promote participation rates of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the State.

Your Committee acknowledges the concerns raised in testimony by the Department of Human Services regarding the difficulty in retaining staff, and that the current workforce vacancy rate for the Department's processing centers for SNAP and cash assistance applications is at approximately twenty-five percent for eligibility workers and fifty percent for clerical staff. Your Committee believes that the Department of Human Services shall endeavor to fill these vacancies before receiving appropriations to establish new positions.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by inserting an effective date of July 1, 2027, to allow the Department of Human Services to fill vacant existing positions in their SNAP processing centers.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 960, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 960, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



