

STATE OF HAWAI'I
Executive Office on Early Learning
Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96826

TO: Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 2233 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Committee: HSH
Date/Time: Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 9:30 a.m.
Location: Conference Room 329

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

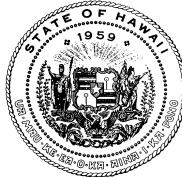
The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in support of H.B. 2233 and defers to the University of Hawai'i and the Department of Health regarding implementation and funding.

This measure aligns with the Early Learning Board's current framework of policy priorities, which is grounded in the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan. Specifically, the bill advances State Plan Building Block 1: Keiki and 'Ohana Health, Safety, and Well-Being by supporting programs that increase opportunities for physical activity and nutrition and promote early childhood health.

The Hawai'i Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education (SNAP-Ed) supports parents and early childhood providers in building foundations for the lifelong health of Hawai'i's children. The program helps adults make healthier choices for themselves and their families and encourages early care and learning providers to integrate evidence-based nutrition, physical activity, and healthy habits into their programs. Maintaining these services in the absence of federal funding will ensure continued support for the health and well-being of our keiki during this critical period of growth and development.

We appreciate the Legislature's ongoing investment and shared commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's early learning system for our youngest keiki and their 'ohana. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in support of H.B. No. 2233.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELA

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P.O. Box 3378
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 2233
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM**

REPRESENTATIVE LISA MARTEN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026, 9:30 AM Room Number: Conference Room 329
and Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the priorities of the Governor's Executive Budget request for fiscal implications.
- 3 **Department Position:** The DOH supports House Bill 2233 (H.B. 2233) that appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (UH-CTAHR) and the DOH for the continued implementation of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) program.
- 7 **Department Testimony:** SNAP-Ed is an evidence-based program to promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles among low-income populations. The programs goal is to improve the likelihood that persons eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or other people with low income, will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guidance.
- 13 In Hawaii, the SNAP-Ed program is led by two implementing agencies, the UH-CTHAR provides direct nutrition education services, and the DOH provides the support and

1 implementation of policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes. The SNAP-Ed program
2 adopts comprehensive multi-level and public health approaches for its projects and initiatives,
3 encompassing evidence-based direct education, community interventions, changes in PSE, and
4 multi-sector collaborations and partnerships. SNAP-Ed activities impact all sectors of
5 society—including SNAP-Ed eligible individuals and families, communities, and organizations,
6 small and large businesses, and policy makers. SNAP-Ed outcomes demonstrate positive
7 impacts, with 91% of participants improving their diets, 83% of participants gaining skills in
8 meal planning and budgeting and 40% reporting increased food affordability of sufficient food
9 for their families.¹

10 People in Hawaii face unique and persistent challenges related to food access, cost of
11 living, and health equity. Residents experience some of the highest food prices in the nation,
12 and communities across the state, particularly in rural areas and on neighbor islands, continue
13 to experience disparities in access to affordable, nutritious food and opportunities to be
14 physically active. The SNAP-Ed program, and the community partners it supports, directly
15 address these challenges by delivering culturally responsive, community-based PSE changes,
16 and nutrition education that rely on the local food systems, tradition and lived realities.

17 An example of a successful DOH SNAP-Ed program is the establishment of Food Access
18 Coordinator's (FACs) in each county along with additional coordinators in Waianae and Molokai
19 for a total of six across the state. The FACs are developing networks of food system
20 stakeholders, building a shared understanding of each county's food systems, and improving
21 access to locally produced foods for residents facing food insecurity. SNAP-Ed initiatives also
22 support PSE strategies in schools, community organizations and local settings. These efforts

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2024). Hawaii SNAP-Ed State Impact Reports. Retrieved January 30, 2026, from SNAP Education Connection website: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/library/materials/hawaii-snap-ed-state-impact-reports>

1 contribute to healthier food environments and reinforce long-term, sustainable changes across
2 communities statewide.

3 The DOH supports H.B. 2233 that would fund the continued implementation of the
4 SNAP-Ed program as an effective, evidence-based tool that improves health outcomes,
5 supports families, and contributes to a healthier future for Hawaii.

6 **Offered Amendments:** None

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

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LATE

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Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2233
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 9:30 A.M., Conference Room 329

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health supports the intent of HB2233 and offers comments. EOA requests that this program
3 and appropriation not conflict with, reduce, or replace priorities identified in the executive
4 budget.

5 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates funds for FY 2026–2027 to the University of
6 Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health to
7 continue implementing the Hawai'i Supplemental Nutrition Assistance – Education (SNAP-Ed)
8 Program.

9 **Purpose and Justification:** Federal funding for SNAP-Ed was eliminated. This measure seeks
10 to restore critical funding for an evidence-based program that provides nutrition education and
11 obesity prevention, helping families and older adults maximize their SNAP benefits.

- 1 SNAP-Ed teaches skills for healthy meal preparation, food budgeting, and encourages physically
- 2 active lifestyles. The program also includes a Farm to School component, connecting children to
- 3 farming and local agriculture.
- 4 Restoring funding will ensure continued access to these essential services that promote food
- 5 security and healthier communities for families, children, and older adults.
- 6 **Recommendation:** EOA supports the intent of this measure and defers to the University of
- 7 Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health
- 8 for implementation.
- 9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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Executive Officers

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Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 10, 2026

TIME: 9:30am

RE: HB2233 Relating to Public Assistance

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure to appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) and the Department of Health (DOH) to continue their implementation of the Hawai'i Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education Program.

As the measure notes, “the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program—education (SNAP—Ed) program, active from 1992 until its discontinuation in 2025, was a critical, evidence-based program that directly improved the health and well-being of low-income families. SNAP-Ed provided essential nutrition education, promoted healthy eating, improved cooking and budgeting skills, and expanded access to nutritious foods.”

Ensuring that Hawaii residents have access to information about healthy eating, and supporting programs like DA BUX that make fresh local food more affordable are the best ways to ensure that SNAP users can make healthy choices for themselves and their families.

We urge the committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 4:36:51 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Henry Curtis	Life of the Land	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

Please support this critical issue now that the fed govt has bailed on financing the program

Mahlo



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

SUPPORT FOR HB 2233: RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Hearing: **Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 9:30 AM; CR 329 or Videoconference**

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee on Human Services and Homelessness:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB 2233**, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health (DOH) to continue their implementation of the Hawai'i Supplemental Assistance Program (SNAP) - Education Program

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax-exempt, Community-Based Organization that has provided social services in Hawai'i for more than 78 years, now serving over 40,000 individuals statewide each year. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for Hawai'i's most vulnerable, and we have a long-standing history of leadership in affordable housing, homelessness solutions, and child welfare.

This program brings basic food budgeting and food preparation skills to people receiving SNAP benefits. This program is especially valuable to young parents who may be buying and preparing food for their families for the first time. Many kids may have grown up on fast foods. This is an opportunity to learn healthier habits. This program of nutritional education can help to improve both health and reduce obesity.

We are truly thankful to the UH and DOH for picking up this program since it has been eliminated from the federal budget. This program has been active since 1992 and has been a critical, evidence-based program that has directly improved the health of low-income families. This SNAP education program would provide essential nutrition education, promote healthy eating, improve cooking and budget skills and even expand access to nutritional foods. It is a **Win-Win situation for the families and our State** to promote healthy families, reduce food insecurity, and reduce long-term health spending.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i thank the Legislature for the opportunity to testify on this important measure. We respectfully urge your support for our SNAP families in Hawai'i.

If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813.



HIPHI Board

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*Retired, Hawai'i State Department of
Health*

HIPHI Initiatives

*Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i*

*Community-Based Research &
Evaluation*

*Community Health
Worker Initiatives*

Environmental Health

*Hawai'i Climate Change and Health
Working Group*

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

*Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living*

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 8, 2026

To: Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Health Services and Homelessness

Re: Support for HB 2233 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Program Education Program

Hrg: February 10, 2026, at 9:30 am, Conference Room 329

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating + Active Living² (HEAL) Statewide Coalition are in support of HB 2233, which appropriates state funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health to continue implementation of Hawai'i's SNAP-Ed program.

SNAP is a Lifeline

In Hawai'i, where families face some of the highest food costs in the nation, nutrition education and practical food budgeting skills are essential tools for health and stability. 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i face food insecurity.³ Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are a lifeline to many of these residents. Local families in need receive over \$600 million annually in SNAP benefits.⁴ These high food insecurity levels are directly linked to Hawai'i's extremely high cost of living and disproportionate food costs, which force families to choose between food and other essentials like rent and utilities, a reality that persists even among working households.

Improving Tools for Healthy Nutrition

SNAP-Ed addresses these urgent household challenges by equipping families with practical, culturally responsive nutrition education and food

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i - Hawai'i Food Bank.
https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/HawaiiFoodbank_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii_2023.pdf

⁴ Hawai'i Department of Human Services.
<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SFY-2024-SUMMARY-apr.pdf>



budgeting skills, which strengthen food security and improve dietary quality. These outcomes align closely with the priorities identified in the Hawai'i Physical Activity & Nutrition (PAN) Plan 2030, which emphasizes increasing access to healthy food as part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce obesity, chronic disease, and health disparities statewide. The PAN Plan's long-term goals include reducing chronic disease burden and increasing healthy eating opportunities for low-income residents and priority populations.⁵

With federal SNAP-Ed funding now eliminated, state investment through HB 2233 is essential to continue these critical services. Without sustained funding, we risk losing a cornerstone preventive program that helps families manage high living costs, improve health behaviors, and reduce avoidable healthcare burdens.

Please support HB 2233 to ensure SNAP-Ed remains available as a vital public health and food security intervention in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren Loor".

Lauren Loor
Healthy Eating + Active Living Statewide Program Manager

⁵ Hawai'i Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan 2030, Hawai'i State Department of Health Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division. https://hhsp.hawaii.gov/assets/pdf/HHSP_PAN_Plan_WEB.pdf

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 7:13:26 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
GARY SIMON	Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports HB 2233, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health to continue their implementation of the Hawaii Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education Program (SNAP-Ed).

SNAP-Ed is a sound investment in our State's health, wellbeing, and economy.

SNAP-Ed:

- Provides essential food assistance to low-income individuals and families;
- Reduces food insecurity and hunger across our Islands' communities;
- Stimulates our State's economy by increasing purchasing power for groceries;
- Supports nutrition education and healthy eating habits;
- Helps to alleviate poverty and improve overall health outcomes; and
- Offers a safety net during economic downturns and emergencies.

We urge you to support SNAP-Ed and HB 2233, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Gary Simon

Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition

Honolulu, Hawaii

Email gsimon@aarp.org



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM ‘ÖNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony Hō‘ike Mana‘o I Mua O Ka ‘Aha‘olelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.

By
Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Agriculture and Human Resilience
and
Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2233 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on the HB 2233 which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) and the Department of Health (DOH) to continue their implementation of the Hawai'i Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education Program (SNAP-Ed).

Over 30% of Hawai'i's families are food insecure according to the 2025 Hawai'i Food Bank Survey. Food and nutritional security are critical for children's health, positive youth development, student learning, worker productivity, and resilience of families and communities. Helping families become food and nutritionally secure through enhancing access and improving knowledge about healthy diets, cooking and culturally-appropriate recipes is one of CTAHR's key missions.

In this effort, the Department of Health and Human Services had two implementing agencies - CTAHR and DOH, which collaborated since the establishment of the federal SNAP Ed program. However, the discontinuation of the program has resulted in the loss of 13 community-trusted nutrition educators at CTAHR, further increasing the risk to nutritional security, children's health, and resilience of families. To build a sustainable approach to these persistent challenges and to uproot food and nutritional insecurity, CTAHR is building a Human and Community Resilience Institute that will take a data-driven and community-based approach in collaboration with governmental and non-profit organizations.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need for community nutrition education programs for a food secure and healthy Hawai'i. The appropriations in the bill will support community nutrition education assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB 2233 – Relating to The SNAP-Ed Program
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
Thursday, February 10, 2026, at 9:30AM

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2233, which would support services formerly funded by the federal SNAP-Ed program.

Hawai‘i Appleseed is committed to advancing an equitable food system in Hawai‘i, where all residents have access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally significant foods. We support HB 2233, as it provides critical funding to the University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR) and the Department of Health for the continuation of the SNAP-Ed Program. This critical funding was eliminated by Congress’ passage of H.R. 1 also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.¹

SNAP Ed has shown lasting impact in Hawai‘i for a relatively small price tag. For approximately \$1.6 million annually, the program directly supports two parallel pathways for improving food security for vulnerable populations across Hawai‘i. UH CTAHR’s portion of the funding supports direct nutrition education, including meal planning and budgeting, reading nutrition labels, and preparing healthy foods at home. Data from direct education classes show that the program delivers tangible results—improving diet quality, building practical budgeting and meal-planning skills, and enabling families to afford more food without increasing their monthly budget.²

The funding also supports Hawai‘i’s network of Food Access Coordinators—positions that have been critical in coordinating a variety of food access and disaster response initiatives in their respective communities and counties in recent years.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to fully fund HB 2233 to ensure the ongoing success of SNAP-Ed in Hawai‘i. This small investment will make a large impact in the health and well-being of Hawai‘i’s families, and we appreciate the opportunity to support this important measure.

¹ Section 10107 of *Public Law 119-21* (the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025*) amends Section 28(d)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 by ending required funding for the SNAP Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program (SNAP-Ed) with the FY 2025 grant allocation; unexpended FY 2025 funds may be used in FY 2026 to operate SNAP-Ed but mandatory funding thereafter is eliminated.

² UH SNAP-Ed program serving ‘ohana, keiki and kūpuna threatened by federal cuts,” *Maui Now*, June 9, 2025.

LATE



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February 10, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2233
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-
EDUCATION PROGRAM

Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice-Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 2233, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) and the Department of Health (DOH) to continue their implementation of the Hawai'i Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education Program.

HB 2233 underscores the importance of strengthening community resilience through education, coordination, and capacity-building. These efforts are important to supporting communities, food systems, and long-term sustainability across Hawai'i.

From an agricultural perspective, resilience is closely tied to the strength of our local food system, our agricultural workforce, and the institutions that support farmers, families, and communities. CTAHR has long played a critical role in these efforts through its research, extension, education, and community-based programs. CTAHR's existing partnerships with farmers, ranchers, community organizations, schools, and state agencies provide a strong foundation for advancing the objectives outlined in this measure.

As this measure moves forward, we respectfully encourage continued coordination with CTAHR's existing initiatives to ensure alignment, efficiency, and effective use of resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 3:53:39 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Butel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB2233 to restore funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) in Hawai‘i.

Through my work and direct experience with SNAP-Ed, I have seen firsthand how this program positively impacts individuals, families, and communities across our state. SNAP-Ed participants gain practical skills to stretch limited food budgets, prepare healthier meals, and make informed choices that support their health and well-being. These changes may seem small at first, but over time they lead to meaningful improvements in food security, confidence, and quality of life.

I have also observed how SNAP-Ed goes beyond individual education to strengthen entire communities. By working in partnership with schools, community organizations, and local agencies, SNAP-Ed helps create environments that support healthy choices and builds relationships rooted in trust and shared purpose. These partnerships have contributed to stronger, more resilient communities that are better equipped to respond to challenges such as rising food costs and health disparities.

At a time when many Hawai‘i families are struggling with economic uncertainty and the high cost of food, the loss of SNAP-Ed funding would be deeply felt. Restoring this funding through HB2233 is an investment in prevention, community capacity, and long-term health. It ensures that Hawai‘i can continue to support residents not only in meeting immediate needs, but in building skills and systems that promote resilience and well-being for years to come.

For these reasons, I urge you to support HB2233 and restore SNAP-Ed funding in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my experience and for your continued commitment to the health of Hawai‘i’s communities.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Butel

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 5:21:30 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Butel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in support of HB2233 to restore funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) in Hawai‘i. Even though I am fortunate enough to have a comfortable financial situation, as well as a comprehensive knowledge of nutritional and healthy lifestyle choices; there are far too many in our state not as fortunate and/or in need of assistance.

As an evidence-based program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) has helped our community's population make their SNAP dollars stretch, taught them how to shop for and cook healthy meals, and lead physically active lifestyles.

SNAP-Ed has partnered with multiple state and local organizations to meet people where they are. SNAP-Ed initiatives include nutrition education classes, social marketing campaigns, and efforts to improve policies, systems, and the environment within our communities.

Current times are difficult for so many Hawai‘i families and individuals. The loss of SNAP-Ed funding would be deeply felt. Restoring this funding through HB2233 is an investment in prevention, community capacity, and long-term health.

For these reasons, I urge you to support HB2233 and restore SNAP-Ed funding in Hawai‘i.

Michael Butel, Honolulu

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 6:57:13 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SNAP-Ed is a proven, helpful, and much needed program that deserves to be funded.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 8:33:51 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Manali-Leonardo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

HB2233 is one of the most important Bills before you this session of the Legislature.

As a retired RN I can tell you that not having food security for *everyone* is one of the biggest failures of a civil society.

Please pass this worthy and needed Bill.

Mahalo,

Nancy Manali-Leonardo, RN, BEd.

808-542-1556

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 8:54:38 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lourdes Scheibert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: House Committee on Health

FROM: Lourdes Scheibert

RE: Support for HB2233 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education (SNAP-Ed)

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Health:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB2233, which appropriates state funds to continue the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education (SNAP-Ed) through the University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health.

SNAP-Ed is a prevention-based public health program that helps low-income families improve nutrition, make healthier food choices, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. These conditions drive a significant portion of Hawai‘i’s long-term health care costs and disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.

With the elimination of federal SNAP-Ed funding, Hawai‘i risks losing an effective, evidence-based tool that supports disease prevention, health equity, and community education. Replacing these lost federal dollars with state funding is a prudent investment that will help maintain critical services at a time when food prices remain high and many households are struggling to meet basic needs.

From a health policy perspective, HB2233 supports:

- Preventive care and health promotion
- Reduced strain on emergency and acute care systems
- Improved long-term population health outcomes

Continuing SNAP-Ed aligns directly with the mission of the House Committee on Health to advance policies that keep Hawai‘i residents healthier and reduce avoidable health care costs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB2233.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 9:24:39 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kimura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is downright unconscionable that the current administration and congressional majority should cut spending for the most essential, humanitarian needs of our people, in order to needlessly benefit the overfed gluttonous wealthy.

There is evidence that SNAP recipients do learn to budget spending on food and to increase awareness of nutritional principles that support sound health.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 12:24:14 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
H. Doug Matsuoka	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the Committee,

I'm a 73 year old IT guy who retired from 20 years of work with nonprofit social services in 2024. I applied for and started receiving EBT benefits last year. I found Hawaii's SNAP-Ed program while looking for ways to maximize my EBT benefits through their program, "Food to Grow."

I was surprised to find it had been cancelled by the BBB that terminated funding for SNAP Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program.

I spoke with the directors of Hawaii's program and was surprised to find what an enduring and worthy program it is. The web site and its assets are still available. It's the closest thing to a "just add water" program that there can be.

Although the program is helpful for seniors like myself, it has broad social benefits and may be most valuable to young parents who are purchasing and preparing food for the first time after having meals prepared for them or bought at the corner 7 Eleven or McDonald's. The benefits learned through the SNAP-Ed program will serve them for their entire lives and the future generations that they are raising. This certainly qualifies it as a program for the public good.

Please pass HB2233 and restore funding for this program.

Mahalo

H. Doug Matsuoka

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 12:47:28 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lila Mower	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2233 with its goals to provide funding in support of healthy eating and to reduce food insecurity in our community.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 12:49:56 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing in strong support of this vital funding.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 12:08:48 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dale A. Head	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha:

This is a worthy Bill, to offset federal cuts in funding for SNAP recipients. It is the 'Pono' thing to do.

Mahalo, Dale A. Head

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 2:45:13 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/10/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeff Sadino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting those who the most vulnerable amongst us, especially during these tough and uncertain times, is money well spent. We have a minimum moral and ethical standard to hold ourselves accountable to.

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Deanna Au-Wong, and I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB2233 to appropriate funding to continue Hawai'i's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education (SNAP-Ed) through the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health. I would like to state for the record that the opinions expressed herein are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the University of Hawai'i.

For more than seven years, I worked for the University of Hawai'i SNAP-Ed program, partnering with schools, kūpuna groups, farmers markets, food banks, and other community agencies across the state. Last fiscal year, our SNAP-Ed team reached more than 15,000 households, providing practical education on how to make healthy food and beverage choices, keep food safe, stretch food dollars, and make physical activity part of daily life. These are not abstract lessons — they are real, hands-on skills that participants use immediately.

SNAP-Ed works because it meets people where they are and respects local culture and foods. During the pandemic, we developed "Food to Grow", which is a project that provided vegetable seedling kits and hands-on gardening workshops for participants ranging from keiki to kūpuna. Families learned how to grow their own vegetables in containers just outside their front door and even on apartment balconies. Over 5000 seedlings such as bok choy, Waimānalo eggplant, and Komohana tomatoes were distributed at over 100 events across the state.

At these workshops, many participants were surprised and excited to learn they can use their EBT cards to purchase seeds and plants that grow food. Growing food at home saves money and makes healthy eating fun. Parents and grandparents grow vegetables alongside their children and grandchildren, turning gardening into an intergenerational bonding activity. Keiki who help grow vegetables are much more willing to eat them. Participants proudly share photos of meals they've prepared at home made with vegetables they grew themselves. These are lasting behavior changes, not temporary fixes.

In our workshops, we also teach what balanced meals actually look like. Many residents are surprised to learn that half their plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables — much more than the small side salad that sometimes accompanies a plate lunch heavy with white rice and mac salad. This education empowers families to make healthier choices without completely giving up the foods they love.

We also traveled to Lahaina to provide nutrition education at the Maui Food Bank pantry. After the wildfires, families facing tremendous hardship shared that they didn't realize they were eating too many refined grains, such as meals centered around large portions of white bread or white rice. Several participants, including wildfire survivors, told me they had heard they should eat whole grains but never understood why until our lessons. Learning the "why" helps people make lasting changes for their health.

SNAP-Ed also improves access to healthy foods. We developed and installed EBT signage at farmers markets so shoppers know they can use their benefits there. At the Kaumuali'i People's Open Market in Kalihi, a man saw the standing sign and excitedly told his elderly mother, "Look, Mom! We can use our EBT card here!" That simple sign opened the door for them to buy fresh, local produce.

The statewide data confirms what we see every day: ninety-one percent of participants improve their diets, eighty-three percent gain meal planning and budgeting skills, and forty percent report increased food affordability or enough food for their families. SNAP-Ed reduces food insecurity, prevents chronic disease, and strengthens local food systems. It is one of the most cost-effective public health investments we have.

Out of the many testimonials that we've received from participants, this is my favorite: "As a young single mother, SNAP-Ed was incredibly helpful. I learned how to prepare meals to feed my young family. I learned how to use different veggies to make healthy meals. I was also able to use fruits in ways I had never thought of before. If it wasn't for SNAP-Ed when I was young and inexperienced, I would have never been able to introduce the wonderful world of fruits and veggies to my family. Now that I'm older and married, I still use some of the skills I learned from SNAP-Ed."

With the loss of federal funding, Hawai'i risks losing a proven, prevention-focused program at a time when food costs are rising and health disparities are widening. Prevention is far less expensive than treating diabetes, heart disease, and other diet-related illnesses.

We are making a real difference in helping Hawai'i families eat healthier, save money, and build resilience. I respectfully urge you to fully fund and sustain SNAP-Ed through the University of Hawai'i and the Department of Health.

I truly appreciate your support and your commitment to the health of our communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Deanna Au-Wong