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GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

January 28, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2211 – MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

Hearing: January 30, 2026, Time 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) strongly supports this bill, which makes an emergency appropriation to DHS for emergency food assistance to recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, expanded food distribution and delivery, and call center support during the 2025 federal government shutdown.

DHS respectfully requests an emergency appropriation of \$14,248,126 in general funds to restore DHS program funding for state fiscal year (SFY) 2025-2026. The federal government shutdown from October 1, 2025, through November 12, 2025, threatened food security statewide and disrupted federal programs, including the employment and compensation of Hawaii's federal workforce and contractors. During the shutdown, the DHS faced significant operational challenges when the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, issued multiple instructions that caused considerable confusion about the amount and timing of the November distribution of SNAP benefits.

To ensure continued access to food for residents impacted by the shutdown, DHS redirected \$46,151,160 in general fund appropriations from multiple program IDs and established the Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program (HEFAP). The HEFAP provided a \$250 food benefit to eligible SNAP recipient households. Redirected funds were also used to contract with the Hawai'i Foodbank and its statewide network to increase food availability for the public; with Aloha United Way to provide call center support to assist residents in locating resources; and for DHS information technology services to facilitate benefit distribution.

As of November 25, 2025, DHS successfully issued the HEFAP food benefit to 81,399 eligible SNAP households, representing 161,549 individuals. The benefit cost for 27,406 eligible households with a dependent child, totaling 101,655 individuals, was covered with federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds. The remaining balance of \$14,248,126 in redirected general fund appropriations, specifically: \$11,807,126 for HEFAP, \$2,000,000 to support Hawaii Foodbank for purchase and distribution of food, and \$441,000 to the Aloha United Way for 211 call center support, must be restored to ensure that affected DHS programs can meet their SFY 2025-2026 obligations and to avoid incurring penalties and interest. We respectfully request that the measure be expedited.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure and for the Legislature's support.



January 28, 2026

**Testimony in Support of S.B. 2211
Relating to Emergency Appropriation for SNAP Households**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee,

Aloha United Way **strongly supports** S.B. 2211 and the Governor's emergency request to stabilize food access for Hawai'i families affected by disruptions in federal SNAP benefits.

SNAP is a critical lifeline for tens of thousands of households in Hawai'i, and is a vital support for our ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households. When benefits were frozen during the 2025 federal government shutdown, the impact was immediate. On that day alone, Aloha United Way's 211 Statewide helpline received over 1,000 calls from families urgently seeking food and assistance. The call volume reflects the real and urgent fear families experience when SNAP support disappears.

This bill provides an essential bridge by enabling DHS and community-based providers to respond quickly, expand food delivery, and strengthen the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program. These resources will prevent hunger, stabilize families, and reduce downstream health and economic costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I urge your strong support of S.B. 2211.

Mahalo,

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way



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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: January 30, 2026

TIME: 3pm

RE: SB2211 Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services
Position: Strong 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.

As this measure notes the Federal Government shutdown in October of 2025 resulted in disruptions to the timely distribution of SNAP benefits, threatening the food security of households who rely on these payments for essential nutrition.

We are extremely grateful to Governor Green, State Legislators, and DHS administrators for their support in providing emergency funding in November to ensure that Hawaii families who rely on SNAP benefits would have funds available to purchase food.

The Government shutdown created a crisis of uncertainty around SNAP funding, which is such a vital tool in combatting food insecurity in our state, and around the country. We are proud that our state met that challenge in the best way possible.

Hawaii showed incredible proactive leadership in stepping up for the neediest people in our state by loading EBT cards with an additional state funded \$250 per SNAP recipient to address the potential hunger crisis that could have resulted from the government shutdown.



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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

We thank you for the opportunity to testify.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

SUPPORT for SB 2211: MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

TO: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Friday, 1/30/26; 3:00 pm; CR 224 & Videoconference

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Committee on Health and Human Services:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i **supports SB 2211**, which provides an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to assist households enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and to expand food delivery services through contracted community-based providers, including supplemental support for the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a community-based organization that has served Hawai'i for over 78 years, providing social services to more than 40,000 individuals statewide each year. Our programs serve some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, including kūpuna, veterans, children, families, individuals experiencing homelessness, and immigrants. Because of our mission to strengthen families and support those most in need, we are deeply concerned about the growing levels of food insecurity across our islands.

According to *The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i 2024–2025*, lack of access to sufficient, nutritious food remains one of the state's most urgent challenges. The report found that **32% of Hawai'i households experience food insecurity**, and **11% of households went an entire day without food at least once in the past year**. These figures represent real people in our communities—families, elders, and children struggling to meet basic needs.

Food insecurity is also closely tied to negative health outcomes. The report identified strong associations between food insecurity and chronic conditions such as anxiety, depression, and gastrointestinal illnesses. Many food-insecure households also reported delaying or forgoing necessary medical care due to financial strain, compounding long-term health risks and increasing pressure on Hawai'i's health care system.

SB 2211 is an important step toward ensuring that SNAP households have more reliable access to food, particularly through expanded delivery services that can reach seniors, people with disabilities, and others facing barriers to traditional food access. At the same time, it is important to recognize the broader scope of need. The report found that **44% of households earning under \$90,000 per year are food insecure**, highlighting that food hardship affects many working families in Hawai'i as well.

In these uncertain times, Hawai‘i must continue to strengthen the resilience of its food systems and expand targeted supports for residents experiencing food insecurity. We respectfully urge your Committee to pass SB 2211 and to continue advancing comprehensive solutions that ensure all people in Hawai‘i have access to the food necessary for their health, stability, and dignity.

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

SB-2211

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 8:42:42 AM
Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Thomas Carlisle, MD, MPH	Testifying for Hawaii Academy of Family Physicians (HAFP)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SENATE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Sen. Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair

Date: January 28, 2026

From: Hawai‘i Academy of Family Physicians Legislative Committee (HAFP)

RE: SB 2211; Emergency Appropriation to DHS for SNAP

Position: Support

Thank you for allowing testimony on SB 2211. The Hawai‘i Academy of Family Physicians Legislative Committee (HAFP) recognizes that access to quality nutrition is vital to the health of the people of Hawai‘i. Families who rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are at risk of immediate food insecurity and adverse outcomes in the short and long terms without this essential resource. Ensuring uninterrupted access to nutrition helps prevent avoidable illnesses and affirms our shared commitment to care for our communities most in need. HAFP highly endorses and supports the emergent use of general funds to mitigate the lapse in federal funding of SNAP benefits.

Thank you for allowing testimony on this vital bill to assure the basic health needs of the people of Hawaii.

Robert Thomas Carlisle, MD, MPH
Chair, Legislative Committee

Hawai‘i Academy of Family Physicians

advocacy@hafp.info



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The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health And Human Services
Friday, January 30, 2026
Conference Room 224, 3:00 PM

TO: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawai'i
RE: Support for S.B. 2211 -Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Dept of Human Services

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. **AARP supports S.B. 2211 which makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and expand food delivery services which include expanding the Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program.**

Older workers and retirees living on a fixed income already know all too well that inflation and rising food prices are stretching household budgets in ways that make it harder to put food on the table. Some of them may face life challenges as they age—such as experiencing a medical crisis, job loss, or death of a spouse or other loved one—that may result in financial instability and make it difficult to afford food. For example, newly widowed older adults experience higher poverty rates, greater housing cost burdens, and challenges to get the help they need.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are a crucial ingredient in the food budgets for many Hawaii residents especially kūpuna. Food assistance for low-income older adults is essential; food insecurity has significant negative impacts on older adults, particularly on their health. Older adults who are food insecure are more likely than their food-secure counterparts to have limitations on activities of daily living, have conditions like diabetes and depression, and experience heart attacks. Research shows that SNAP enrollment among older adults is associated with fewer hospital and emergency room visits and long-term care admissions. Enrolling in SNAP can also lead to increased well-being, especially among older adults. As inflation continues driving up the costs of groceries and other necessities, programs like SNAP that help eligible older adults are especially important. SNAP benefits increase food security and reduce monthly food costs. Making an emergency appropriation to provide emergency assistance to households participating in SNAP can help ensure low-income kūpuna have the resources they need. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 2211.



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January 30, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

TESTIMONY ON SB 2211

MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
3:00 PM

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair McKelvey, 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 SB 2211, which makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to provide assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and to expand food delivery services through contracted community-based providers, including the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program.

HFB has long supported SNAP and related nutrition assistance programs. SNAP plays a critical role in helping low-income individuals and families access food during periods of economic hardship, and disruptions in benefits can have immediate and serious impacts on food security, health, and household stability.

From an agricultural perspective, SNAP also provides indirect benefits to Hawai'i farmers and ranchers. SNAP dollars circulate through grocery stores, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture programs, and other food retailers, helping to support demand for food products, including locally grown produce and protein. Programs that maintain or stabilize food purchasing power benefit both SNAP participants and the local agricultural economy.

SB 2211 addresses an emergency situation resulting from disruptions in federal SNAP benefit distribution and provides DHS with the flexibility needed to mitigate harm to vulnerable households. HFB supports the State stepping in during extraordinary circumstances to help ensure continuity of access to food.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



HPCA

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Friday, January 30, 2026; 3:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

Via Videoconference

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2211, MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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. 2211, MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN 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.

This measure, as received by Your Committee, would authorize an emergency appropriation of an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026, for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to:

- (1) Provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and
- (2) Expand food delivery services through its contracted community-based providers, including to supplement or expand the Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program (Program).

The bill would take effect upon its approval.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2211
Friday, January 30, 2026; 3:00 p.m.
Page 2

SNAP, formally known as the "Food Stamps Program", is the largest federal food assistance program that is currently in operation. It provides food purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people. SNAP helped approximately 40 million persons in 2018, at a cost of \$57.1 billion. Approximately 9.2% of American households received SNAP benefits at some point during 2017, with approximately 16.7% of all children living in households receiving SNAP benefits.

Founded during the height of the Great Depression, SNAP is the cornerstone of our national social safety net. It is intended to prevent mass starvation caused by unemployment and homelessness. SNAP also seen as a way of helping the poor while boosting the economy and ensuring that American's farmers would obtain a fair price for their labors by allowing government to purchase and distribute excess goods in time of crisis.

The HPCA has strongly endorsed SNAP in the past and we continue to urge your support. The continuation of SNAP benefits for a recipient can mean the difference between having to decide whether someone's last amount of cash will go for food or rent or medications or other necessities.

In November 2025, the federal government shutdown stopped the provision of SNAP benefits to Hawaii's citizens. To prevent catastrophic outcomes for Hawaii's citizens, DHS, by Executive Order, established the Program separate from SNAP to provide a \$250 per person benefit for food and groceries at retail locations that accept Electronic Benefit Transfer cards. It is our understanding that this Program was funded by utilizing existing departmental resources to meet this emergency need. As such, the emergency appropriation requested in this bill would help to cover the shortfall caused by these efforts.

Further with another federal government shutdown likely to occur shortly, it will be vital that the DHS has sufficient resources to continue this essential Program without delay.

Accordingly, the HPCA respectfully urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

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@hawaiipca.net.

SB-2211

Submitted on: 1/29/2026 10:29:15 AM
Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Lusk	Testifying for Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB2211 which will make an appropriation to DHS to increase funding for SNAP.

As you know, Hawaii families are struggling with food insecurity and given the federal changes in SNAP and other benefits, SB 2211 is needed to ensure increased access to healthy foods.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

Heather Lusk



To: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Director of Public Policy
Maria Rallojay, Public Policy Specialist

Hearing: Friday, January 30, 2026, 3:00pm, Conference Room 224

RE: **SB2211 Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SB2211**. This measure makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and to expand food delivery services through its contracted community-based providers, including to supplement or expand the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program.

AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan founded by Hawai'i's Community Health Centers and the Queen Emma Clinics. We serve over 66,000 Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dual-eligible residents on all islands. Since 1994, AlohaCare has partnered with providers, government entities, and community-based organizations to meet the evolving needs of our safety net community as Hawai'i's only health plan focused solely on Medicaid-eligible individuals. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for equitable access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare is committed to whole-person care by addressing key social determinants of health like housing, economic stability, and nutrition. We understand that food insecurity is a critical health issue and a key driver of health inequities, especially for our members, 37% of whom are keiki. Food insecurity remains high among households receiving or seeking SNAP, particularly when benefits are denied¹. In Hawai'i, where food costs are among the nation's highest, many households rely on SNAP to meet basic needs. Even brief disruptions in SNAP benefits, as we've witnessed in November of last year, can force families to choose between food, housing, and healthcare, with long-term impacts such as worsening health outcomes. Thus, AlohaCare supports this measure because stabilizing food access during a lapse in federal funding is both a social and healthcare investment.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of **SB2211**.

¹ 75% food insecure for households who applied or received SNAP, and 83% food insecure for those denied SNAP. Hawai'i Food Bank, Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i, Maui Food Bank, The Food Basket. The State of Food Insecurity in Hawaii 2024-2025. 2025.

https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/HawaiiFoodbank_FoodInsecurityReport_2025-25.pdf

SB-2211

Submitted on: 1/27/2026 6:13:33 PM
Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

Until our federal government stops interfering with people's lives our state needs to support our people.

Makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and to expand food delivery services through its contracted community-based providers, including to supplement or expand the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program.

SB-2211

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 3:58:16 AM
Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghhee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for hearing this measure.

SB-2211

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 9:46:16 AM
Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

SB-2211

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 12:17:54 PM
Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleo K	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in **strong support** of SB2211. This support is critical as thousands of keiki and kupuna rely on SNAP to avoid hunger and maintain basic nutrition, particularly now as federal SNAP benefits face disruptions and changes. Ensuring protective measures like those in **SB 2211 helps keep our most vulnerable families fed and supported.** Mahalo.

SB-2211

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 1:37:57 PM
Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex chao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Bill Number: S.B. 2111

Committee: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: Friday, January 30, 2026

Position: Support

Aloha kakou,

My name is Alex Chao. I am a social worker and MSW student at UH Manoa. In my time working as a case manager at Catholic Charities and Residential Youth Services and Empowerment, I frequently met with clients experiencing food insecurity who were not eligible for SNAP benefits, or were only eligible for insufficient SNAP benefits. During Covid when I lost my job, SNAP benefits were the only reason I was able to feed myself and my partner. An estimated 84,869 households (=165,659 people) currently receive SNAP in Hawai‘i. This bill is a critical and timely response to a federal shutdown that is beyond the control of SNAP recipients. More needs to be done to protect SNAP benefits at the state level. Please pass this bill for Hawaii’s children and families.

Mahalo,

Alex Chao

SB-2211

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 10:19:09 PM
Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni DeFranco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of the Committee,

My name is Keoni DeFranco, and I submit this testimony in my personal capacity in strong support of SB2211.

Across Hawai‘i, many families, kūpuna, and individuals rely on SNAP benefits to meet their basic food needs. When these benefits are delayed or disrupted, households immediately experience hardship, including food insecurity, increased stress, and difficult choices between food and other essential expenses.

The recent federal shutdown has created serious challenges for families who were already living on limited resources. Emergency assistance and expanded food delivery services are critical to ensuring that vulnerable households are able to access adequate nutrition during this time.

SB2211 provides a timely and compassionate response to help mitigate the impacts of SNAP disruptions and strengthen community-based food support systems.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support SB2211 and move this important measure forward.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Keoni DeFranco

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: January 29, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 2211
Measure Title: MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.
Report Title: DHS; Emergency Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 2211. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

January 29, 2026

To: Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Subject: **SB2211**, Relating to Making An Emergency Appropriation To The Department of Human Services

Aloha,

I am writing in **support of SB211**. This initiative aims to create an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and to expand food delivery services through its contracted community-based providers, including to supplement or expand the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Hawai'i has faced many challenges in recent years. Recently, with the impacts of the federal government shutdown, many residents who are part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) were at risk of losing their benefits. SNAP provides monthly benefits to low-income households for purchasing food. In 2024, over 160,000 Hawai'i residents received SNAP benefits totaling about \$753 million¹. SNAP is crucial in providing support to families in need, with more than 56% of SNAP participants are in families with children, 37% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled, and 35% are in working families². Providing emergency appropriations to the Department of Human Services to provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and to expand food delivery services through its contracted community-based providers is important in ensuring families are contiounslly fed.

I highly urged that the committee pass this bill to continue supporting families especially in times of need. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Best,
Clyds Bautista Manzano

¹https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/DHS_AnnualReport_V17-Compressed.pdf

²https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_hawaii.pdf



LATE

HIPHI Board

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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: 1/29/26

To: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Health and Human Services

RE: Support for SB 2211, Making An Emergency Appropriation To The Department Of Human Services

Hrg: Friday, January 30, 2026, at 3:00 PM, Conference Room 224

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) Coalition **supports SB 2211**, which makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and to expand food delivery services through its contracted community-based providers, including to supplement or expand the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Support in Uncertain Times

During the government shutdown in 2025, where federal SNAP benefits were paused, Hawai'i stood strong with our SNAP community, providing \$250 per person. This essential support was a lifeline to the more than 140,000 residents enrolled in this program.

Ensuring the Department of Human Services (DHS) receives funds to compensate for this program is important to ensure DHS or any other agency has the green light to support our communities when the time comes.

SNAP Necessity

With over 140,000 Hawai'i residents participating in SNAP, receiving on average \$370 per month, this program is incredibly important for the livelihoods of not just those enrolled in SNAP but also our state as a whole. \$600 million annually flows into our state via federal SNAP benefits, helping families eat and circulating throughout our economy.

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.



The state's commitment to this program is needed now and into the future, especially given the unpredictable support that the federal government will provide.

Thank you for your strong commitment to our families in need and your continued support for the departments that serve them.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nate Hix".

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy



Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB 2211 – Relating to Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services.

Senate Committee on Health & Human Services
Friday, January 30, 2026, at 3:00PM

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SB 2211**, which would make an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide emergency assistance to households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and to expand food delivery services through its contracted community-based providers, including to supplement or expand the Hawai‘i Emergency Food Assistance Program (HEFAP).

SNAP is a critical lifeline for more than 155,000 Hawai‘i residents, supporting working families, individuals with disabilities, and others living on fixed or limited incomes.¹ Without it, many of these individuals would not have any money to pay for food at all. Additionally, 1 in 3 Hawai‘i residents remain food insecure, struggling with the state’s continued high cost of living.²

During the federal shutdown, Hawai‘i acted rapidly in distributing an emergency benefit of \$250 in food assistance, by leveraging the existing Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system.³ HEFAP and community partners helped households bridge the gap created by the disruption in federal SNAP funding—an approach this bill would strengthen and build upon. Moreover, expanding food delivery services through contracted providers can help reach populations that may otherwise face barriers to accessing nutritious food, including kūpuna, people with disabilities, and those living in remote areas.

SNAP is the largest and most critical public benefit program in the state, and its federal funding is projected to be reduced under H.R. 1. These changes will directly constrain the level of food assistance available to Hawai‘i households, increasing the risk of benefit reductions or gaps in assistance in the coming years. SB 2211 provides Hawai‘i with a necessary safeguard, ensuring the state has the capacity to respond quickly and protect residents from the downstream impacts of federal funding cuts.

We appreciate the Legislature’s consideration of SB 2211 as an important measure to strengthen Hawai‘i’s food safety net during times of uncertainty. By ensuring that emergency resources can be deployed quickly and equitably, this bill helps protect households who are most vulnerable to disruptions in food access.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP Data Tables: National and/or State Level Monthly and/or Annual Data,” Food and Nutrition Service, 2025. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

² Hawai‘i Foodbank, “The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai‘i 2024-2025: Executive Summary,” Hawai‘i Foodbank, November 2025. https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/HFB_ExecutiveSummary2025_Web-FINAL.pdf

³ Department of Human Services, “DHS ISSUES UPDATE ON SNAP BENEFITS AND THE HAWAII EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,” November 2025.

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/dhs-issues-update-on-snap-benefits-and/>