



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 2233, H.D. 1
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM**

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TODD, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: March 4, 2026
10:00 AM

Room Number: Conference Room 308
and Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the priorities of the Governor's
2 Executive Budget request for fiscal implications.
- 3 **Department Position:** The DOH supports House Bill 2233, House Draft 1 (H.B. 2233, H.D. 1) that
4 appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human
5 Resilience (UH-CTAHR) and the DOH for the continued implementation of the Supplemental
6 Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) program.
- 7 **Department Testimony:** SNAP-Ed is an evidence-based program to promote healthy eating and
8 healthy lifestyles among low-income populations. The programs goal is to improve the
9 likelihood that persons eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or
10 other people with low income, will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and
11 choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the 2020-2025 [Dietary Guidelines for](#)
12 [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
14 provides direct nutrition education services, and the DOH provides the support and

1 implementation of policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes. The SNAP-Education 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-Education activities impact all sectors of
5 society—including SNAP-Education eligible individuals and families, communities, and organizations,
6 small and large businesses, and policy makers. SNAP-Education 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-Education 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 relies on the local food systems, tradition and lived realities.

17 An example of a successful DOH SNAP-Education 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-Education initiatives also
22 support PSE strategies in schools, community organizations and local settings so people have
23 the healthy food choices and opportunities for physical activity. These efforts contribute to

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2024). Hawaii SNAP-Education 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 healthier environments and reinforce long-term, sustainable changes and values across
2 communities statewide.

3 The DOH supports H.B. 2233, H.D. 1 that would fund the continued implementation of
4 the 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.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 10:00 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 HD1 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on the HB 2233 HD1 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.

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

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STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2233 HD1
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-
EDUCATION PROGRAM

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

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

Hearing: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:00 A.M., Conference Room 308

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health supports the intent of HB2233 HD1 and offers comments. EOA requests that this
3 program and appropriation not conflict with, reduce, or replace priorities identified in the
4 executive 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 to the Department of Health
7 to continue implementation of the Hawai'i Supplemental Nutrition Assistance – Education
8 (SNAP-Ed) Program.

9 **Purpose and Justification:** Federal funding for SNAP-Ed was eliminated in 2025. This
10 measure seeks to restore critical funding for an evidence-based program that provides nutrition
11 education and obesity prevention, helping families and older adults maximize their SNAP
12 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.



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'aina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

TO: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

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

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 2233, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL
NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Committee: FIN
Date/Time: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Location: Conference Room 308

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, H.D. 1 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.

Executive Office on Early Learning

H.B. No. 2233, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Page 2 of 2

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, H.D. 1.

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY
KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 11th FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



KEALOHA FOX, Ph. D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA

VACANT
DEPUTY DIRECTOR &
DEPUTY CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
HOPE PO'O & HOPE KAHU OLA LOA

TESTIMONY OF KEALOHA FOX, PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND
RESILIENCY AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:00 AM
Conference RM 308 and Via Videoconference

TO: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair, Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Finance

RE: SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2233 HD1, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM

The City and County of Honolulu's ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** House Bill 2233 HD1, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health to continue implementation of the Hawai'i Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education (SNAP-Ed).

With approximately one in four O'ahu residents experiencing food insecurity, and many more living paycheck to paycheck, SNAP-Ed programs at both the University of Hawai'i and the Department of Health play a critical role in strengthening food access, nutrition education, and community food security initiatives across O'ahu and statewide.

The City has directly benefited from SNAP-Ed. The program has provided key resources that supported the early implementation and development of the City's first-ever Food Systems Plan, scheduled for completion later this year. This plan establishes a clear framework to strengthen O'ahu's food system by improving interagency coordination, deepening partnerships with community, enhancing efforts to secure external funding, and advancing transparency and accountability.

By accelerating the City's ability to build a more equitable, resilient, and locally rooted food system, SNAP-Ed helps ensure that county-led food system initiatives are responsive to community needs and aligned with broader state efforts such as Farm to School and Farm to State.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB2233 HD1.



HIPHI Board

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Department of Pediatrics

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For Children in Hawai'i

JoAnn Tsark, MPH
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Hawaiian Research Office

Danette Wong Tomiyasu, MBA
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: March 2, 2026

To: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Finance

Re: Support for HB 2233 HD1, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition
Program-Education Program

Hrg: March 4, 2026, at 10:00 AM, Conference Room 308

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating + Active Living² (HEAL) Statewide Coalition are in **support of HB 2233 HD1**, 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://hawaiiifoodbank.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 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 this measure to ensure SNAP-Ed remains available as a vital public health and food security intervention in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nate Hix', written in a cursive style.

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

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



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

SUPPORT FOR HB 2233 HD1: RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-EDUCATION PROGRAM

TO: House Committee on Finance

FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Wednesday, March 4, 2026; 10:00 AM; CR 308 or Videoconference

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouch, and Members, Committee on Finance:

I am Betty Lou Larson with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB 2233 HD1**, 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 their efforts to sustain this program since it has been eliminated from the federal budget. This has created a significant gap in nutritional education. 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 the life-long health of families, reduce food insecurity, and reduce long-term public health costs.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i thank the Legislature for the opportunity to testify on this important measure. We respectfully urge your support for this bill and the numerous positive impacts that it will provide to our SNAP families in Hawai'i.

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





Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: **HB2233 HD1 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education Program**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 4, 2026, 10:00 AM

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2233 HD1**. This bill appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health to continue their implementation of the Hawai'i Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education Program (SNAP-Ed).

This bill would provide state funding so Hawaii can continue SNAP-Ed, a program that used to be funded by the federal government. SNAP-Ed helps families learn about healthy eating, cooking skills, meal planning, and stretching their food dollars. It also supports schools and community groups that teach kids about good food and healthy living.

SNAP-Ed teaches children and families how to eat more fruits, vegetables, and balanced meals — helping students have the energy and focus they need at school. Kids who have regular access to healthy food and nutrition education are less likely to be hungry, overweight, or sick.

When families struggle to buy enough food, kids can be insecure, tired, or anxious at school and home. SNAP-Ed also helps parents stretch limited food budgets and plan healthy meals, reducing stress on the whole family.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy



March 2, 2026

To: Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi and the Members of the House Committee on Finance

Subject: **HB2233 HD1**, Relating to The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program– Education Program

Aloha,

I am writing in **support of HB2233 HD1**. This bill is asking for funds to be secured and distributed to the Department of Health to continue the SNAP-ed Program.

1 in 3 households are struggling with food insecurity in Hawai'i. The federal government has abandoned and removed SNAP-ed from the federal budget despite proven evidence of it being a successful program. Last year the Department of Health and the University of Hawai'i were able to administer the SNAP-ed program with a budget of \$1,570,000,000. The committee reports they now only ask for a \$1,200,000 budget. I urge you to work with these institutions and provide the funding they require to continue the proven successful program SNAP-ED. This program provides resources such as, nutrition education, budgeting, meal prep, expanded access to nutritious foods.¹ These resources create positive lifestyle changes that help prevent chronic disease. The Child Healthy Living Program is a product of SNAP-ED.² It was designed for children living in the Pacific region with the goals of developing more nutritious diets, promoting positive health outcomes, and improving well-being. This program saw positive results in the children making healthy lifestyle choices, practices they will keep for life. There are plenty of testimonies from folks who greatly benefited from this program as adults and Kupuna. Secure funds for the SNAP-ED program is a positive, and successfully proven investment into our communities' health and well-being.

I urge this committee to **pass HB2233 HD1** & continue to invest in the health of our keiki & communities. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,

Sydney Haas & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

¹ Oster, H., & Chaves, I. (2023, October 31). *Effects of healthy lifestyles on chronic diseases: Diet, sleep and exercise*. Nutrients. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10650398/>

² *The children's healthy living program*. SNAP Education Connection. (n.d.). <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/library/intervention/childrens-healthy-living-program>

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



March 2, 2026

**Testimony in Support of H.B.2233 H.D.1
Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education Program**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee,

Aloha United Way is in strong support of H.B. 2233, H.D. 1, which appropriates funds to continue Hawai'i's SNAP-Ed program following the loss of federal funding.

In Hawai'i, 40%¹ of households are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), working families who earn above the federal poverty level but still struggle to afford basic necessities. Alarming, 46% of ALICE households are food insecure. These families are often forced to make difficult tradeoffs between rent, utilities, healthcare, and food.

SNAP-Ed has been a proven, evidence-based program that improves nutrition, strengthens meal planning and budgeting skills, and increases food security. Participants report healthier diets, stronger cooking and budgeting skills, and improved food affordability. These supports are especially critical for ALICE households who may not qualify for traditional assistance but still face significant financial strain.

Beyond helping individual families, SNAP-Ed is a cost-effective investment that strengthens community health and helps prevent long-term diet-related disease and healthcare costs.

At a time of rising food prices and growing economic pressure, maintaining SNAP-Ed at the state level is essential to supporting Hawai'i's working families and improving food security statewide.

We respectfully urge passage of H.B. 2233, H.D. 1.

Mahalo,

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way

¹ <https://www.auw.org/about/alice-initiative/alice-reports/>



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 Finance
Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 10:00 AM

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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.



2026 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for
Progressive Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kaua'i
Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Department of
Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 10:00AM

RE: Support for HB 2233, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education Program

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express support for HB 2233, which would support services formerly funded by the federal SNAP-Ed program.

SNAP is a critical lifeline for around 160,000 Hawai'i residents, supporting working families, individuals with disabilities, and others living on fixed or limited incomes. Beyond the benefit itself, education and community-based support are equally essential to supporting families struggling with Hawai'i's high cost of living.

SNAP-Ed provides essential programs that can improve dietary habits, support local agriculture, and reduce food insecurity, particularly among children, kūpuna, and low-income households. **By appropriating funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience and the Department of Health, HB 2233 makes up for the critical funding that was lost during last year's sweeping federal cuts.**

This funding also sustains Hawai'i's network of Food Access Coordinators, who play a vital role in connecting communities to nutrition resources and coordinating food access and disaster response efforts across the state.

Mahalo for your consideration of HB 2233. Funding SNAP-Ed is key to providing nutrition education, outreach, and resources to those most in need.

With aloha,
Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e:
info@hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Chair*
Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Vice Chair*
Jill Tamura, Tamura Super Market, *Secretary/Treas.*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *President and Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
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 Finance
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 4, 2026
TIME: 10am

RE: HB2233 HD1 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-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:25:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Writing in strong support of this important bill to facilitate the continuation of the SNAP-Ed program. Mahalo.

HB-2233-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:39:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this legislation.

Davd Ball,

Waiialae-Kahala

HB-2233-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:33:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

HB-2233-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:17:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine L. Andrews, J.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a member of the Hawai'i Hunger Action Network and I support this bill. Thank you for hearing the bill and I request you pass it out of committee.

HB-2233-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:28:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 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-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:36:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
H. Doug Matsuoka	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express my strong support for HB2233 Re SNAP-Ed.

I am a 73 year old resident of Honolulu. I retired from a career in nonprofits in 2024 at age 72, twenty of those years in social service nonprofits. I am a former director of the senior advocacy group, Kokua Council and always on the lookout for programs that might be beneficial to seniors like myself.

Last year I found out that I qualified for Food Stamps, or SNAP/EBT as its called now. I went looking for programs that could optimize my use of SNAP and found “Food to Grow” a program that taught people how to buy seeds and seedlings with their EBT card then grow their own food in pots. I found that this program was a component of UH CTAHR’s SNAP-Ed program—and that it had been cancelled.

I found that Hawaii’s SNAP-Ed program provided a wide range of programs that taught how to optimize SNAP benefits by teaching beneficiaries what a nutritious food items are, and how to prepare them. It also was the program that brought school gardens to neighborhood schools in their “Farm to School” program. The programs weren’t cloistered at the UH but were statewide on the neighbor islands.

Although the SNAP-Ed program would be helpful for the more than 33,000 seniors who receive SNAP benefits, it would probably even more useful for young families with more than 47,000 children in SNAP receiving households.

The previous funding of \$1.57 million per year is minuscule compared to the \$700 million SNAP expenditure for Hawaii, and will provide lasting benefits, especially to the young families and kids who learn lessons that will last a lifetime.

The program itself is completely noncontroversial and is consistent with the requirement for States to restore funding to terminated Federal programs.

Mahalo for your time and attention to this.

H. Doug Matsuoka

