



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness**

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

9:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

**In Support**

**House Bill No. 2310, Making an Emergency Appropriation to the  
Department of Human Services**

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

The Office of the Governor strongly supports H.B. No. 2310, Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services. This bill would provide the Department of Human Services with an emergency appropriation of \$14,248,126 to the department to restore general fund appropriations that were redirected to address the federal shutdown last year to provide residents with access to food and reduce food insecurity.

The Office of the Governor would also like to request an additional appropriation amount of \$16.5 million in this bill, to be expended by the Department of Human Services, to help cover the costs of the enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits for everyone in Hawai'i that are currently using them to buy insurance – to help keep coverage affordable for our families, seniors, and children. No family in Hawai'i should have to choose between receiving medical care or having to skip purchasing basic needs because of the ACA subsidies expiring in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure and for the Committee's consideration of the additional appropriation request.

Testimony of the Office of the Governor

X.B. No. XXX

XX XX, 2026

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JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
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 HAWAI'I  
**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

February 16, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2310 – MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT  
OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

**Hearing:** February 17, 2026, Time 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) strongly supports this administration 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. Importantly, DHS requests an amendment to incorporate the Governor's request for additional funds to help cover costs resulting from the expiration of the enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits on December 31, 2025, which Congress did not renew.

DHS respectfully requests an emergency appropriation of \$30,748,126 in general funds to restore DHS program funding for state fiscal year (SFY) 2025-2026; the amount is comprised of \$14,248,126 used to address food insecurity during the 2025 federal government shutdown, and \$16,500,000 will be used to assist residents in continuing to afford health care coverage provided by the ACA.

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, 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 DHS programs can meet their SFY 2025-2026 obligations and to avoid incurring penalties and interest. We respectfully request that the measure be expedited.

The Office of the Governor is working with DHS to determine how to assist residents in covering the cost of health insurance available through the federal marketplace. Some residents who relied on the enhanced ACA tax credits to purchase health insurance are facing higher premiums and need assistance to maintain coverage. DHS requires an additional appropriation of \$16.5 million in general funds to implement this effort.

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



February 13, 2026

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Support of HB2310

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our support for HB2310, Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services (DHS). This bill provides an emergency appropriation to DHS to replace general fund appropriations redirected to provide emergency food assistance during the 2025 federal government shutdown.

Food insecurity is a growing crisis in Hawai'i, with one in three households—including families with children—struggling to access adequate food. One in five households have individuals who are skipping meals or going whole days without eating on a regular basis.

At Hawai'i Foodbank, we have seen first-hand the challenges that our food-insecure neighbors face on a daily basis, trying to put food on the table for their families and ensure their keiki and kūpuna have enough healthy food to eat. DHS provides crucial support to families facing food insecurity and other hardships. It is critical that DHS remains fully funded as we work together as a community to ensure no one in Hawai'i goes hungry.

With aloha,

Amy Miller

President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

### **SUPPORT FOR HB 2310: MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness  
FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026; **9:30 AM**; CR 329 or Videoconference

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members, Committee on Human Services and Homelessness:

I am Betty Lou Larson from Catholic Charities Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB 2310**, which provides an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to replace general fund appropriations redirected to provide emergency food assistance during the 2015 federal government shutdown.

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 programs serve some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, including children, families, kupuna, veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and immigrants. Because of our mission to strengthen families and support those most in need, we are deeply concerned about issues of food insecurity across our islands.

With amazement and deep gratitude, we reflect on the State's swift response to the threat that hundreds of thousands of Hawai'i residents would lose essential food benefits during the 2025 federal shutdown. In the midst of chaos and uncertainty, DHS quickly redirected funding to keep food on the tables of 161,549 SNAP recipients as well as 101,655 individuals in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF). Wow!

Now it is critical to replenish these funds so DHS can continue provide the services that thousands of families across Hawai'i rely on. We respectfully urge your support for an emergency appropriation of \$14,248,126 to the Department of Human Services.

Hawai'i continues to face unacceptably high levels of food insecurity. *The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i 2024-2025* reports that **32% of Hawaii households experience food insecurity**, and **11% of households went an entire day without eating** at least once in the past year. These figures represent real people in our communities—families, elders, and children struggling to meet basic needs. In these uncertain times, Hawai'i must strengthen the resilience of its food systems and protect those most vulnerable. This bill is a vital step to ensure that DHS can continue to support our kupuna, families and children with the food they urgently need.

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





## HIPHI Board

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## 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: 2/15/26

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

RE: Support for HB 2310, Making an Emergency Appropriation to the  
Department of Human Services

Hrg: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 329

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Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)<sup>1</sup> and the Healthy Eating, Active Living<sup>2</sup> (HEAL) Coalition **supports HB 2310**, 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).

### 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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



Date February 10th 2026

To: Chair San Buenaventura Joy , Vice Chair Mckelvey Angus and the House Committee on Financial services.

Subject: **House Bill 2310 Making an emergency appropriation to the department of human services**

Aloha,

As a member of the Hawai'i Food + team, I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2310. HB2310 makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to restore state funds that were redirected to provide emergency food assistance during the 2025 federal government shutdown. The government shutdown that occurred from October 2025 until November 2025 imposed serious threats to Hawai'i's food security, Hawai'i's food assistance system, and the Department of Human Services (DHS).

During the government shutdown, federal funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was cut off. Thousands of residents in Hawai'i rely on SNAP to meet their basic food needs. When funding was disrupted, the State of Hawai'i stepped in to fund SNAP to make sure people who rely on SNAP were still fed. Although this was the right decision, it came at a large cost to the State of Hawai'i. To keep SNAP funding intact, the state used funds that were meant for the Department of Human Services. To keep families fed, many budget shortfalls were created within DHS and other critical government services. DHS services include, but are not limited to, financial assistance, food security, healthcare, child care, and social services. There are services that are now short on funding due to the cut in federal funding for SNAP.

This bill would reimburse the State of Hawai'i and DHS for the funds they used to cover food assistance during the shutdown. This would ensure DHS is not left short on funding for stepping up during this federal crisis. This bill would allow DHS services to continue operating and allow affected services to recover after budget shortages. Lastly, the State of Hawai'i should not have to pay simply because federal systems failed the state.

Mahalo,

Carlin McFadden & the Food+ Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

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**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.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness  
Tuesday, February 17, 2026; 9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2310, MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, 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 \$14,248,126 of general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026, for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to appropriate general funds to replenish the remaining balance of fiscal year 2025-2026 general fund appropriations that were redirected to support Hawaii residents' food security, and enable DHS to meet its existing obligations and avoid the assessment of penalties and interest.

This measure would take effect upon its approval.

**Testimony on House Bill No. 2310**

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:30 a.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.

**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.

To: House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness  
Re: **HB2310 – Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Service**  
Hawaii State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
February 17, 2026; 9:30 AM

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2310**, which provides an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to replace general fund appropriations redirected to provide emergency food assistance during the 2025 federal government shutdown.

During last fall's federal government shutdown, thousands of low-income Hawai'i families faced the start of November without their SNAP benefits loaded onto their EBT cards. We mahalo our state for being among the 11 states that stepped up with state funds to fill in that puka and make sure that our SNAP families didn't go hungry during that gap.<sup>1</sup>

In Hawai'i, SNAP plays a critical role in supporting many of our most vulnerable residents. More than half of SNAP recipients in Hawai'i are in families with children, and SNAP lifted 62,000 people above the poverty line in Hawai'i, including 26,000 children, per year between 2015 and 2019, on average.<sup>2</sup>

The average SNAP benefit per household with children in Hawai'i was \$1,098 per month in fiscal year 2022. In 2024, Hawai'i received \$732.5 million in SNAP benefits, not only lifting up low-income families, but also directly supporting approximately 900 food retailers in Hawai'i.

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

Thank you,

Nicole Woo  
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.multistate.us/insider/2025/11/5/state-lawmakers-jump-into-action-as-federal-shutdown-suspends-food-assistance-programs>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap\\_factsheet\\_Hawai'i.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_Hawai'i.pdf)



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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

**LATE**

DATE: February 17, 2026

TIME: 9:30am

RE: HB2310 Making and Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services

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 provide an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to replace general fund appropriations redirected to provide emergency food assistance during the 2025 federal government shutdown.

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.



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**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*

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.

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

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

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 16, 2026

RE: House Bill 2310  
Measure Title: MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.  
Report Title: DHS; Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program; Federal  
Government Shutdown; Emergency Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 2310. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore