

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
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SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2026
3:05 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 117

**URGING THE GOVERNOR TO ASSESS FOOD INSECURITY CONDITIONS AND
IMPLEMENT A STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY RESPONSE PLAN.**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution No. 117 urging the Governor to assess food insecurity conditions and implement a statewide food security response plan.

The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) supports actions to increase food production that moves the State towards sustainability with disaster preparation as a key component to making Hawaii more food secure and sustainable.

In addition to several important points, HCR 117 brings to attention the need for data-driven assessments, interagency collaboration, and a plan for actions to increase food access. These are relevant and important.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony on this measure.



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TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: April 17, 2026

TIME: 3:05pm

RE: HR109 HCR117 URGING THE GOVERNOR TO ASSESS FOOD INSECURITY
CONDITIONS AND IMPLEMENT A STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY RESPONSE
PLAN.

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. The most recent data from the Hawaii Foodbank shows that our state has 30% food insecurity on average, with some parts of the state experiencing food insecurity rates of close to 40%. Assessing food insecurity conditions in the State and implement a statewide food security response plan to address systemic gaps in access and local production is an important step to fighting food insecurity.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, April 17, 2026; 3:05 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 117 -- URGING THE GOVERNOR TO ASSESS FOOD INSECURITY CONDITIONS AND IMPLEMENT A STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY RESPONSE PLAN.

Chair Gabbardi, Vice Chair Richards, 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** House Concurrent Resolution No. 117 -- URGING THE GOVERNOR TO ASSESS FOOD INSECURITY CONDITIONS AND IMPLEMENT A STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY RESPONSE PLAN., and **OFFERS A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT.**

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.

I. A DIFFERENT ANGLE TO THIS PROBLEM

During the interim following the Adjournment Sine Die of the 2025 Regular Session, four (4) events took place that have enormous ramifications on Hawaii's social safety net. These were:

- The enactment of House Resolution No. 1 (H.R. 1), the "One Big Beautiful Bill" Act, which was signed into law on July 4, 2025;
- The expiration of Enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium tax credits on December 31, 2025;
- The reversal of interpretation of "federal public benefit" under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, or "PRWORA", by the United States Department of Health and Human Services; and

Testimony on House Concurrent Resolution No. 117

Friday, April 17, 2026; 3:05 p.m.

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- The announcement that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services will share personal data of Medicaid enrollees to Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials.

In tandem, these developments will fundamentally alter Hawaii's Medicaid Program by shifting current ACA insureds and Medicaid recipients to the uninsured population. Among other things, H.R. 1 will:

- Prohibit the use of federal matching funds for health care services to immigrants not lawfully present under federal law, effective October 1, 2026;
- Establish work or volunteer requirements for all Medicaid recipients of at least 80 hours per month (or 20 hours per week), effective December 31, 2026; and
- Require redeterminations for every Medicaid recipient every six-months, also effective December 31, 2026.

The expiration of the ACA premium tax credits will:

- Lead to enrollee premium payments to increase by over 75%;
- Lead to households earning over 400% of the federal poverty level (\$63,000 for individuals and \$129,000 for a family of four) no longer receiving any premium tax credits; and
- Force states to provide additional state-funded subsidies to soften the financial impact.

Currently, Hawaii's uninsured population is estimated to be 38,400 or 2.8% of the total population. Based on research provided by the Kaiser Family Foundation as well as our review of Medicaid enrollment historically in Hawaii, **we believe the uninsured population will at least double within two to three years if nothing is done.**

Without health insurance coverage, citizens will no longer be able to manage chronic disease such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and other maladies. When they become ill, they will not get treated until the situation becomes so bad that they will need to go to a provider for emergency treatment. By then, the illness has become much more severe and costly to remedy. Also, by law, the emergency provider will have to provide stabilizing treatment to the patient regardless of the patient's ability to pay. These costs will subsequently be borne by the provider, creating additional stress to the safety net that is already facing reduced funding and reimbursement.

In the worst-case scenario, hospitals and FQHCs will not be able to treat the increase in indigent patients. While federal law requires FQHCs to provide services to all patients who are not eligible for Medicaid or private insurance on a sliding fee scale based on their ability to pay, federal grant funding to offset these costs were not adjusted to address the increase that will occur. As such, should Hawaii

experience the largest projected increase in uninsured (and assuming that the level of services currently provided remains the same), FQHCs will run out of funds within two to three months.

II. HOW THIS IMPACTS FOOD SECURITY

With more people uninsured, the general health care of entire communities will decline. People will put off tending to their health care needs longer. Because of inflation and the lagging of salary increases, our citizens will have a harder time putting food on the table. More and more of Hawaii's population are struggling to survive. With fewer people insured, anytime a family member gets sick, moneys that went for food and rent will have to be shifted to pay for medicine and health provider visits.

And within two to three years, more of Hawaii's families will have to decide whether to forego medical attention to feed their Ohana.

The implementation dates for H.R. 1 are staggered with elements taking effect in October 2026, and others on January 1, 2027. When that happens, hundreds of citizens will lose their Medicaid coverage and fall into this situation.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

In light of all this, the HPCA respectfully requests that the resolutions be amended to include findings noting the impacts of H.R. 1 on Hawaii's social safety net over the next three years and how the staggered implementation of this new law will exacerbate the food insecurity of Hawaii's families very quickly.

With these amendments, the HPCA supports these resolutions.

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@hawaiiipca.net.

HCR-117

Submitted on: 4/16/2026 10:18:32 AM

Testimony for AEN on 4/17/2026 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Conner Birdsall	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

As a 17-year-old high school senior. I urge you to support this bill, because as a society, Hawai'i needs food sustainability now! We are living in a time where we've seen the dangers and possibility of destruction during COVID-19, when lockdown occurred, and cargo ships didn't come. I was 11, and was scared for me, my family, my community, and Hawai'i as a whole. We need to have a sustainable food source here, because now, were at risk of war, and losing cargo ships' accessibility here. Plus, with the current administration, we're likely gonna be forgotten. If you doubt this, then where was federal support and help with the flooding from the Kona Low was here, only a few weeks ago. Where were they when Hurricane Maria affected Puerto Rico? We have to stop relying on the federal government to come save us in our time of need. We need to learn to become independent, sustainable, and think about our people first. And this begins with being sustainable in our food. Thank you

To: Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and the Committee on Public Safety
From: S. Leimana Koehler
Re: HCR 117
Date: Friday April 17, 2026
3:05PM Conference Room 224

Aloha Chairs Belatti, Vice chairs Iwamoto and committee members;

My Name is Leimana and I am a resident of Puna. I currently work as a Domestic Violence Specialist and have seen the devastating effects of food insecurity in the populations I work with.

I **support HCR 117** urging for a comprehensive evaluation of food insecurity conditions and creating a statewide food security response plan. Over the years we have see food prices soar which effect the most vulnerable in our community. During the 2025 government shutdown, for the first time in US history, we saw a halting of SNAP benefits. Families I worked with directly we devastated by this and many lacked the transportation or resources to get to a local foodbank. When the funds were released a few days later, there was the looming “threat” of having to “pay back” the food stamp monies, which caused many of my client’s anxiety and fear as they were unsure of how to proceed. While this wasn’t a natural disaster, it really showed the fragility of Hawaii’s food security system and how one disruption man-made or otherwise, effects thousands of Hawaii families.

Before colonization, Hawaii was completely food sovereign and the people were able to feed and care for themselves independently. I believe with a multi-systemic approach, Hawaii can again regain it’s food sovereignty.

Me ka Ha’aha’a,

S. Leimana Koehler