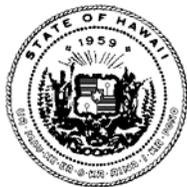


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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 18, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2211 SD1 – MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

Hearing: February 19, 2026, Time 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & 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. 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 that will be used to assist residents in continuing to afford health care coverage provided by the ACA.

The Department's initial request for an emergency appropriation of \$14,248,126 in general funds is to restore DHS program funding for the 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.

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.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 19, 2026; 10:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2211, SENATE DRAFT 1, MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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, Senate Draft 1, 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 \$14,248,126 in general funds for fiscal year 2025-2026, to offset costs incurred by the Department of Human Services (DHS) in providing emergency food assistance to Hawaii residents during the federal government shutdown.

The bill would take effect upon its approval.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2211, Senate Draft 1
Thursday, February 19, 2026; 10:30 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.



February 13, 2026

Testimony in Support of S.B. 2211 SD1

Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee,

Aloha United Way strongly supports S.B. 2211 SD1 which provides an emergency appropriation to replenish funds used to protect Hawai'i residents' food security during the 2025 federal government shutdown.

SNAP is a critical lifeline for tens of thousands of households in Hawai'i and is a critical 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 the day the state's emergency program was announced, Aloha United Way's 211 Statewide Helpline received more than 1,000¹ calls from families urgently seeking food and assistance – a dramatic increase from the typical volume of 150 calls a day. In total, 2025 calls to 211 increased 20% from the year prior, largely driven by families seeking emergency food support during the shutdown.

Statewide, the Department of Human Services responded by providing emergency food assistance to more than 81,000 households, including over 161,000 individuals enrolled in SNAP. These actions prevented widespread hunger and instability but required DHS to redirect existing general funds across multiple programs.

This bill replenishes those funds and provides critical support for the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Hawai'i Foodbank, and AUW's 211 Statewide Helpline. These resources enable DHS and community-based providers to respond quickly, expand food access, and stabilize households during times of disruption.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, and I urge your strong support of S.B. 2211 SD1.

Mahalo,

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way

¹ https://auw211.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/211-Annual-Report-2025_v8.pdf



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Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 19, 2026
TIME: 10:30am

RE: SB2211 MAKING AN 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.

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.

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Re: **SB2211 SD1 – Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services**
Hawaii State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 19, 2026; 10:30 AM

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB2211 SD1**, 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.¹

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.²

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

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

² https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_Hawai'i.pdf



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

SUPPORT for SB 2211 SD1: MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Thursday, 2/19/26, 10:30 AM; CR 211 & Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and the Committee on Ways and Means:

I am Betty Lou Larson from Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We **strongly support SB 211 SD1**, 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 2025 federal government shutdown.

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 houselessness, 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 Hawaii 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 providing the services that thousands of families across Hawai'i rely on. **This allocation will increase the capacity of DHS to rapidly respond to emergencies and crises in the uncertain future.**

Hawai'i continues to face unacceptably high levels food insecurity. *The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i 2024–2025* reports that **32% of Hawai'i 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.

We respectfully urge your support for an emergency appropriate of \$14,248,126 to the Department of Human Services. If you have questions, please contact Betty Lou Larson, at (808)527-4813.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808)527-4813 •



To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

Hearing: Thursday, February 19, 2026, 10:30am, Conference Room 211

RE: **SB2211 SD1 Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Human Services**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB2211 SD1**. 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 SD1**.

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-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:57:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2026 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this legislation.

David Ball

Waiialae-Kahala



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Thursday, February 19, 2026

10:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

In Support

**Senate Bill No. 2211, SD1, Making an Emergency Appropriation to the
Department of Human Services**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of the Governor strongly supports S.B. No. 2211, SD1, 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 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.



February 17, 2026

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Support of SB2211 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our support for SB2211 SD1, 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