



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

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING**
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR
Executive Office on Aging

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**Testimony COMMENTING on SB3245 SD1
RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

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

Hearing: Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 9:30 A.M., Conference Room 329

- 1 **EOA Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health
- 2 (DOH), supports the intent of SB3245 SD1 and offers comments.
- 3 **Purpose and Justification:** Requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum
- 4 certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, participate in the Elderly
- 5 Simplified Application Project, and provide a report to the Legislature. Many kūpuna live on fixed
- 6 incomes and struggle with Hawai'i's high cost of living. For older adults experiencing food insecurity,
- 7 SNAP is a vital safety net that helps them afford nutritious food and maintain a healthy diet. However,
- 8 many eligible kūpuna are not enrolled because the application and recertification processes can be
- 9 difficult to navigate.

10 The Elderly Simplified Application Project is designed to increase SNAP participation among
11 low-income older adults by simplifying the application, interview, and verification requirements. This
12 streamlined process reduces administrative burden and makes it easier for kūpuna to access the support
13 they need. Additionally, by adopting the Elderly Simplified Application Project, more older adults will
14 be able to enroll in SNAP, achieve greater food security, and maintain better health and well-being.

15 **Recommendation:** EOA supports the intent of SB3245 SD1 and defers to the Department of Human
16 Services for its implementation.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SIERRA WHITESIDE
CHAIRPERSON

DAINTRY BARTOLDUS
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
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March 19, 2026

The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Marten and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SB 3245 SD1 - Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) offers **SUPPORT for SB 3245 SD1**, which establishes longer SNAP certification periods and requires participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Project to reduce administrative barriers for households that include older adults and individuals with disabilities.

This measure promotes stability for individuals with disabilities, aging caregivers, and households on fixed incomes who may have trouble with frequent recertification, paperwork, and interviews. Longer certification periods and simplified processes help reduce benefit disruptions, prevent loss of benefits due to administrative barriers, and support consistent access to nutrition.

This bill aligns with Hawai'i's efforts to bridge aging and disability systems, as many households include both aging caregivers and individuals with disabilities who rely on stable food assistance to remain healthy and independent.

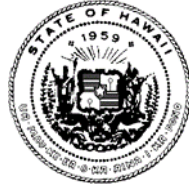
Especially during March for Meals Month, this measure reinforces the importance of nutrition and community supports. Programs like Lanakila Pacific Meals on Wheels provide both nourishment connection, and stable SNAP access complements these services. From a systems perspective, this bill improves access and administrative efficiency while requiring data reporting to better understand participation. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting SB 3245 SD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

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

March 18, 2026

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

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: SB 3245 SD1 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Hearing: March 19, 2026, Time 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and provides comments.

This bill requires DHS to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP). Participation shall include the following:

- (1) Establishing recertification periods of at least thirty-six months for households composed entirely of adults sixty years of age or older or adults with disabilities; and
- (2) Waiving the recertification interview for eligibility households, to extent allowed by federal law.

The Department appreciates the SD1 amendment to change the effective implementation date to July 1, 2028 as this will give DHS time to focus efforts to lowering the payment error rate, adjust to the new Benefit Eligibility Solution system (BES), and assess the

impact, if any, of mandated changes of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), Public Law 119-21, signed July 4, 2025.

Amongst other things, OBBBA changed fiscal requirements and expanded the population of SNAP recipients from ages 18-54 to (OBBBA) 18-64 required to comply with the SNAP Able-Bodied Adults without Dependent Children (ABAWD) work requirements. DHS will need time to analyze the impacts the OBBBA changes have on other States with ESAP programs, and the potential resources needed by the Department to effectively implement ESAP.

As referenced above, in addition to implementing SNAP changes required by OBBBA, DHS is currently testing its replacement eligibility BES system, with piloting scheduled for October 2026, followed by a statewide rollout in February 2027. Once operational, BES will be able to support the option granted to states to extend the certification period for SNAP households aged sixty years or older from twelve (12) months to twenty-four (24) months without a waiver.

For the committee’s information, beginning in federal fiscal year 2028 and continuing annually, OBBBA authorized a new cost-share model for SNAP benefits tied to payment error rates. Currently, the SNAP benefit is 100% federally funded and the OBBBA cost-share will require states to pay a percentage of the SNAP benefit. Specifically, states with a payment error rate of 6% or higher, based on their payment error rate from either federal fiscal year 2025 or 2026 (states choose which year's error rate to use as the baseline), will be required to state-fund a percentage of total SNAP benefits.

Hawaii currently issues roughly \$660 million in SNAP benefits annually. Using this annual amount as an estimate, the percentage tiering for Hawaii would be the following:

Table 1. Cost Share for SNAP Benefits by payment error rate, beginning federal fiscal year 2028.

Payment Error Rate	Cost Share for SNAP Benefits	
	% of State Cost Share for SNAP	Est. Annual Amount to be paid by Hawaii
<6%	0%	\$0
6-7.99%	5%	\$33,000,000
8-9.99%	10%	\$66,000,000
10% or above	15%	\$99,000,000

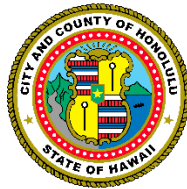
For the federal fiscal year 2024, DHS had a payment error rate of 6.68%. This is the most recent official and final federal fiscal year error rate published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food & Nutrition Services. DHS achieved this by streamlining and solidifying certain processes, thereby stabilizing the overall eligibility process. Although we continue to work to lower the payment error rate, some OBBBA changes took effect on July 4, 2025, the date OBBBA was signed, and we anticipate payment errors. Understanding the financial magnitude a high error rate would have for the State, the Department will continue to prioritize lowering our payment error rate as our top on-going priority for SNAP.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

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
PHONE: (808) 768-2277 • EMAIL: resilientoahu@honolulu.gov • WEBSITE: resilientoahu.org

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 HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS
Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9:30 AM
Conference RM 329 and Via Videoconference

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

RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 3245 SD1, RELATING TO THE
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The City and County of Honolulu's ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** Senate Bill 3245 SD1, which would extend minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and require the Department of Human Services to participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

Food security is a cornerstone of community resilience. On O'ahu, more than one in four households experience food insecurity, and over one-third of residents live below the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) threshold, reflecting the growing gap between wages and the cost of basic necessities. These pressures are intensified by climate-related disruptions, including extreme heat, rising food prices, and supply chain vulnerabilities, which disproportionately impact kūpuna, people with disabilities, and low-income households. Reliable access to nutritious food improves public health outcomes, reduces emergency response needs during climate shocks, and strengthens household capacity to withstand rising costs associated with climate change.

This measure reduces unnecessary administrative barriers that may prevent eligible individuals and families from maintaining their SNAP benefits. Extending certification periods and simplifying recertification for vulnerable populations will reduce the risk of benefit interruptions and help ensure more consistent access to nutrition and improve stability for households already facing compounding economic and climate stresses. This complements City efforts to build a more resilient local food system, reduce disparities in health and economic outcomes, and supports aging in place for kūpuna.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of SB3245 SD1.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB 3245 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9:30AM

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SB 3245**, which would require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), and report to the Legislature.

SNAP is a critical lifeline for more than 160,000 Hawai‘i residents. Without it, many of these individuals would not have any money to pay for food at all. Since benefits are federally funded, federal rules require tedious paperwork and documentation both upon initial application and for periodic recertification.¹ Some SNAP users lose these crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility. This phenomenon, known as “churn,” adds significantly to the administrative burden of administering SNAP at the state level.

This bill would provide some relief for the churn issue. Federal rules allow states to extend the SNAP certification period to for households with seniors or people with disabilities. However, Hawai‘i currently requires recertification every 12 months for most households, with just a six-month “interim report.” Using the ESAP waiver, the recertification period can be up to 36 months. In addition to the three-year certification period, this waiver allows those who are 60+ to waive the recertification interview and allows for a simplified application process. As of 2024, 23 other states have already implemented ESAP and there are more to follow suit.²

The proposed extended certification periods for most households have twofold benefits, reducing workload for both applicants and eligibility staff. We have a unique opportunity to ease the burden on both sides of the application process. Thank you for considering these comments in your deliberation of SB 3245.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP Data Tables: National and/or State Level Monthly and/or Annual Data,” Food and Nutrition Service, 2024. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP State Options Report,” Food and Nutrition Service, 2024, p. 26. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-16th-state-options-report-june24.pdf>

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:06:01 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Estela Chao-Reza	Faith Action for Community Equity	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Human Services & Homelessness Committee

RE: Support for Bill no.

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rev. Dr. Estela Chao-Reza and I am the executive director at Faith Action for Community Equity.

I am writing to express strong support for Bill no.SB3245, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to improve SNAP access and ultimately strengthen our food security landscape here in Hawai'i.

SNAP is critical to the well-being of more than 155,000 residents in Hawai'i who rely on the program to help feed themselves and their families. Despite its importance, many eligible individuals face barriers when applying for and maintaining their benefits. The application and recertification processes can be difficult to navigate, particularly for kūpuna and people with disabilities. In many cases, individuals lose crucial benefits during recertification even when there have been no changes to their eligibility.

The Elderly Simplified Application Program (ESAP) would address these barriers by extending the recertification period to every three years and allowing kūpuna and adults with disabilities to waive recertification interviews. These simple changes would reduce administrative burdens for both applicants and state agencies while ensuring that vulnerable residents maintain consistent access to food. Importantly, 25 other states have already implemented ESAP, demonstrating that it is a proven and effective policy.

Beyond helping households put food on the table, SNAP also strengthens Hawai'i's local economy. Every dollar in SNAP benefits generates additional economic activity as families spend those benefits at local grocery stores, markets, and food retailers throughout the state.

Mahalo for your consideration of Bill no.SB3245. This bill is essential to building a strong, food-secure Hawai'i while sustaining one of our most essential safety nets.



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
House Committee on Health
Thursday, March 19, 2026
Conference Room 329, 9:30 a.m.

TO: The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair
The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
FROM: Kealii Lopez, AARP State Director
RE: Support for S.B.3245, SD1 Relating to SNAP

Aloha Chair Marten, Chair Takayama and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP Hawaii supports S.B. 3245,SD1 because it will significantly improve access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for older adults, a population that faces disproportionately high rates of food insecurity.

SNAP is the nation's largest anti-hunger program and currently supports more than 11 million adults ages 50 and older nationwide, providing essential monthly benefits that help low-income seniors afford nutritious food. Research from AARP shows that more than 9 million older adults experience food insecurity, making SNAP an especially critical resource for older populations.

For Hawai'i where the cost of living is among the highest in the nation, these national trends are even more pronounced. Many kūpuna rely on fixed incomes and face increased barriers to maintaining consistent access to food. Simplifying SNAP enrollment and reducing administrative burdens is one of the most effective ways to increase participation among eligible older adults. Simplifying application and recertification processes leads to higher enrollment among kūpuna, which directly reduces hunger and supports health and independence.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.



PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || www.agstewardshiphawaii.org

March 17, 2026

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

Re: **SB3245 SD1**, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

On behalf of **Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i**, we support **S3245 SD1** which would adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households, enable participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), and require reporting to the Legislature.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i leads the **Statewide Food Systems Coordination Initiative (HSFSC)**, launched in 2024 with philanthropic and gubernatorial support. HSFSC works to align agricultural stakeholders, address infrastructure barriers, secure federal resources, advance institutional procurement of local food, and support policy priorities that strengthen Hawai'i's food system.

SB 3245 aligns with these goals by directly addressing Hawai'i's food insecurity crisis, helping families maintain consistent access to healthy food, easing administrative burdens for participants and staff, and supporting a stronger, more resilient local food system through reduced disruptions in SNAP benefits.

As of 2024, **23 other states** have implemented ESAP, with more planning to follow. Hawai'i has an opportunity to join this growing cohort, providing meaningful relief to both SNAP participants and staff, while supporting food security statewide. We respectfully urge the Committee to support SB 3245, S.D.1, as a practical and impactful measure to strengthen Hawai'i's safety net and food system.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Shaw', is positioned above the typed name.

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator
Email: amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org, Tel: 808 429 5310



HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS
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*John A. Burns School of Medicine,
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Dina Shek, JD
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For Children in Hawai'i*

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*John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native
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 17, 2026

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

RE: Support for SB 3245 SD1, Relating To The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Hrg: Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 329

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) coalition is in **support of SB 3245 SD1**, which requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for households, and would participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity. 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. Unfortunately, the state has made accessing these benefits incredibly difficult. The state needs to improve the enrollment process and ensure local SNAP-eligible residents can receive the federal benefits they need.

Short Certification Periods

Residents in Hawai'i face frequent SNAP recertification requirements, with some needing to re-certify as often as every six months. Kūpuna (60 years and over) are required to recertify annually, even though federal regulations permit them to do so only once every three years.³

Hawai'i has the opportunity to extend SNAP certification periods to the federal maximum for all recipients. This change would significantly reduce the paperwork burden on families and kūpuna, easing stress and administrative challenges.

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 USDA - SNAP State Options Report.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/waivers/state-options-report>



Importantly, it would also reduce the risk of losing benefits during the recertification process, a common issue caused by paperwork difficulties and bureaucratic barriers. By adopting this policy, Hawai'i can ensure more consistent access to essential food assistance for its residents.

Decreased Workload for SNAP Staff

Hawai'i's SNAP department faces overwhelming demand for its services, yet it lacks sufficient staffing to meet that demand effectively. By reducing the frequency of recertification, the department can significantly decrease its administrative workload.

This would free up valuable resources and allow staff to focus on improving the overall efficiency and accessibility of both the SNAP application and recertification processes. Streamlining these operations would benefit not only the department but also the thousands of residents who rely on SNAP for essential food assistance.

Extended Certifications can be Implemented with New Benefits Eligibility System This Fall

We are excited for the new eligibility system to launch this fall which can accommodate extending certification periods. This will streamline the process for both DHS staff and the SNAP applicants.

Please extend the SNAP certification periods to ensure we're doing everything we can to make SNAP as accessible as possible. Mahalo for your consideration.

Mahalo,

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

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy



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 Human Services & Homelessness

Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 9:30AM

RE: Support for SB 3245, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, 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 strong support for **SB 3245**. This bill would require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to extend minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP).

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. Yet food insecurity remains widespread, with 1 in 3 Hawai'i residents struggling due to the state's high cost of living.

One issue our network members report is that the frequent need to recertify can result in some families losing benefits, even when they still qualify. Extending certification periods to the maximum allowable by federal law could alleviate the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff workers. This bill would extend the certification period up to 36 months for kūpuna and people with disabilities—an opportunity to reduce the risk of losing benefits due to paperwork issues. Following suit of 25 other states, implementing ESAP would also simplify the process by allowing kūpuna to waive recertification interviews.¹

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of **SB 3245**. Extending SNAP certification periods will be a tremendous relief for struggling families as well as eligibility staff.

Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP State Options Report," Food and Nutrition Service, 2025, p. 28. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-stateOptionsReport-17edition-120925.pdf>



To: The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair
The Honorable Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health

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

Hearing: Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9:30am, Conference Room 329

RE: **SB3245 SD1 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB3245 SD1**. This measure would require the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the legislature.

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 ensuring whole-person care by addressing key social determinants of health like nutrition. We understand that food insecurity is a critical health issue and a key driver of health inequities. Food insecurity remains high among households receiving or seeking SNAP, particularly when benefits are denied¹. SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the application and recertification process can be complicated and often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Extending the certification period for all recipients would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. As such, AlohaCare supports this measure because these changes would ease the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of SB3245 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-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:44:14 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:16:30 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB3245

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:16:30 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John A. H. Tomoso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: SB3245 SD1

Aloha,

This Bill, for the Elderly Simplified Application Projetc (ESAP) would extend SNAP certification periods and **require** participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP). Thus, as a retired Social Worker and Episcopal Priest, I am advocating for this Bill, as it is of importance to many of those I serve in my continuing professional and sacerdotal capacities.

I am in **strong suppoort** of this bill.

Mahalo a nui,

John A H tomoso+, MSW (ret.), ACSW

51 Ku'ula St

john.a.h.tomosogmail.com

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:49:21 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor McKenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express **strong support for Bill no. SB3245**, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to improve SNAP access and ultimately strengthen our state's food security landscape. This bill will strengthen SNAP by:

- SNAP is critical to the over 155,000 residents who receive benefits in Hawai'i
- Elderly Simplified Application Program (ESAP) extends the recertification period to every 3 years and allows kūpuna and adults with disabilities to waive recertification interviews
- 25 other states have already implemented ESAP

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of Bill no. SB3245. This bill is **ESSENTIAL** to building a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i while strengthening one of our most essential safety nets.

Mahalo nui loa,

TK McKenzie

Honolulu, Hawai'i

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 9:30 am

Via Videoconference and Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF SB 3245, SD1 - RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Aloha Chair Marten, Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Olds, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Rep. Amato of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews, and I live in Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of SB 3245, SD1**, which requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

SNAP is critical to the over 155,000 residents who receive benefits in Hawai'i.¹ Unfortunately, SNAP applicants face many barriers to applying for federal SNAP benefits and some SNAP users lose crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility. Senate Bill 3245, SD1 would help overcome some of these barriers for our elderly community members by implementing the Elderly Simplified Application Program (ESAP). ESAP is a SNAP demonstration project focused on households with adults aged 60 or older and people with disabilities. ESAP streamlines the application and certification process by simplifying the verification process, providing 36-month certifications, and waiving the recertification interview. ESAP serves households that do not have earned income and in which all adult members are aged 60 or older and/or have a disability. Twenty-five other states have already implemented ESAP.²

ESAP is a model program with documented benefits that would help provide food security for our vulnerable kūpuna. I respectfully request that you **vote in support of SB 3245, SD1**.

Mahalo for supporting our most vulnerable community members,

Christine Andrews

Wailuku, Maui

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP Data Tables: National and/or State Level Monthly and/or Annual Data," 2025.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP State Options Report," Food and Nutrition Service, 2025, p. 28.

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-stateOptionsReport-17edition-120925.pdf>

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:53:30 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Extending SNAP certification periods for seniors makes good sense because it reduces administrative burdens on both elderly participants with fixed income and state agencies, while increasing program access, and decreasing unintentional loss of benefits. Importantly, this will result in ensuring continuous food security for seniors in need.

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services,

Aloha,

I am a resident of the Big Island writing in strong support of SB3245. This bill, which extends the minimum certification periods for SNAP benefits and implements simplified application processes, is a crucial step toward fixing a broken safety net. I have seen firsthand how the administrative churn of the Department of Human Services creates unnecessary hardship for local families who are just trying to keep food on the table. The current system practically punishes people for needing help, turning survival into a full-time job of managing paperwork.

Navigating DHS bureaucracy is exhausting, and the constant demand for recertifications and interim reports leaves zero room for error. When you are dealing with state agencies, nothing is as simple as it should be. Forms are incredibly complex, and small technicalities can derail an entire family's access to benefits. I know this from personal experience; dealing with DHS documentation often feels like a trap where simply providing the required information does not guarantee the assistance you desperately need. Forcing families to repeatedly prove their circumstances through convoluted processes only increases the chance that a missed deadline or a misinterpreted requirement will result in their benefits being abruptly cut off.

That kind of sudden administrative disruption has real, immediate consequences for families like mine. My wife and I have a daughter, and ensuring she has what she needs is our absolute priority. Relying on EBT for groceries is already challenging on a practical level, when your card's magnetic strip stops working and online shipments don't arrive. When you add the looming threat of SNAP benefits being interrupted because of disability-related form mistakes due to arbitrary recertification red tape, it creates a constant, underlying stress that no household should have to carry. We need systems that provide a reliable foundation, not ones that threaten to pull the rug out from under parents and children over a paperwork hurdle. Many of our at-risk community members require help filling out these forms. When the forms come due, they trigger strict deadlines that disability advocates must rush to help their clients meet, which is ridiculous when the reality is the department already has real-time access to the fixed income and asset information for the elderly and disabled who rely on Social Security.

Beyond the vital relief this will bring to families, SB3245 is simply good governance. Through my own involvement in local politics and advocacy work at the state legislature, I have seen how much time and taxpayer resources are wasted on redundant administrative bottlenecks. By extending the certification periods to twelve months for standard households and longer for our kupuna and individuals with disabilities, we can free up DHS caseworkers to actually help people rather than just processing the same forms over and over. It is a practical, cost-effective solution that treats Hawaii's vulnerable populations with the dignity and respect they deserve.

I strongly urge the committee to advance SB3245. It is time to remove these unnecessary barriers and ensure that our food assistance programs actually serve the people who need them most without burying them in red tape.

Mahalo,
Ian Seely

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:49:48 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Justice, M.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair; Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee on Human Services & Homelessness; and Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair; Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee on Health

I am a resident of Kapolei, a member of the Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network, and a follower of the Hawai'i Hunger Action Network. I am writing to provide testimony in strong support for SB3245 SD1. This Bill has the potential to improve SNAP access and ultimately strengthen our state's food security landscape.

SNAP is critical to the over 155,000 residents who receive benefits in Hawai'i. However, SNAP applicants now face many barriers to applying for federal SNAP benefits. Some SNAP users lose crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility. The Elderly Simplified Application Program (ESAP) extends the recertification period to every 3 years and allows kūpuna and adults with disabilities to waive recertification interviews. Twenty-five other states have already implemented ESAP.

Allowing inmates to apply for SNAP before being released allows them to access food immediately upon reentry, instead of waiting weeks or months during community reintegration. Over 90% of people recently released from prison report food insecurity, and many go entire days without eating. Thirteen states have successfully implemented SNAP pre-release waivers.

Ensuring food access improves the recipients' health, reduces reliance on emergency services, homelessness, and reincarceration. These benefits to individuals also result in reduced costs to taxpayers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on behalf of this important bill.

Respectfully,

Robert L. Justice, M.D.

LATE

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 6:55:51 PM
Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this legislation.

David Ball

Waialae-Kahala

LATE

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2026 7:11:41 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/19/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tani Salazar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in strong support for this simplified application project to support older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for hearing this measure!