

HB-40

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 7:07:14 AM

Testimony for HSH on 2/13/2019 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

HB-40

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 11:21:15 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/13/2019 8:30:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alyssa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Representative Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair

Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Alyssa Barbosa-Grogan

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

Support for H.B. No. 40

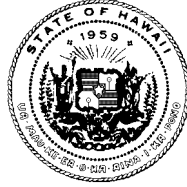
My name is Alyssa Barbosa-Grogan, a Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work Graduate Student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am submitting this testimony in support of H.B. No 40 relating to Human Services. As a future social worker that will be working with marginalized and oppressed individuals I feel this bill has the best interest for Hawaii's families. Community assistance is out there; services offered by Catholic Charities, Parents and Children Together (PACT), Helping Hands Hawaii are a few organizations known to partner with Hawaii's families. However, many individuals are unaware of the support services offered to the community. If this bill were to be passed, I strongly feel it will help those who are faced with food insecurity. According to Feeding America, one in eight people struggle with hunger, and one in six children struggle with hunger in the state of Hawaii. Many lower income families could benefit with this supplemental nutrition assistance program aid with other organizations whom they are currently receiving services from.

Food insecurity hits close to home for me; I grew up food insecure and would remind myself to save all and any food I received because I did not know when my next meal would be. Families that currently work with non-profit organizations, businesses, and faith-based organizations and were given applications to establish food security would allow children and parents to thrive. I strongly support and feel if this bill were to be passed many families in our local community will be given the opportunity to provide for their children, children will be able to go to school ready to learn because they were

provided sustenance to help with their mental growth. This bill is the first step to help our families.

Thank you,

Alyssa Barbosa-Grogan



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 12, 2019

LATE

LATE

TO: The Honorable Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: HB 40 - RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing: Wednesday, February 13, 2018, 8:30 am
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill to increase Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation. DHS respectfully opposes this measure due to concerns regarding implementation, confidentiality, and privacy protection.

DHS is actively working on a strategy to transition the SNAP application process to the DHS Enterprise platform. Once implemented, an individual will be able to apply for SNAP and Medicaid benefits at the same time which will increase applicant access to multiple programs.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to authorize health care providers, non-profit organizations, businesses, and faith-based organizations to distribute supplemental nutrition assistance program applications to prospective applicants. The bill requires any organization distributing supplemental nutrition assistance program applications to maintain records of the distribution that shall be made available to DHS upon request.

The connection between poverty, food insecurity and health is also well-established, however, there are several privacy concerns and logistical issues that need to be addressed.

SNAP is exclusively federally funded program through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The USDA, FNS, establishes uniform

standards of operation for the SNAP program nationally and, provides regulations that protect an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality. Asking SNAP participants and applicants the simple question of whether they are receiving SNAP violates an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality. Moreover, disclosure of information obtained from a recipient may be made only to persons directly connected with the administration of SNAP or to others provided that the program recipient signs a release form documenting their agreement to the specific release of information. Such an agreement shall not be a condition of receipt of benefits as provided under 7 CFR Section 272.1(c). Disclosing information on individuals is protected under the Federal Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and implementing regulations as well policies which require safeguarding information related to SNAP applicants and participants.

The bill authorizes health care providers to ask individuals about SNAP participation and to report to the Department of Human Services, an aggregate collection of data about the state supplemental assistance program participation to aid policy makers in establishing plans to maximize federal funding and increase access to nutritious foods. While the intent of this bills is in line with FNS efforts to expand access, it raises the following logistical issues:

- (1) The federal FNS determines the efficiency and effectiveness of SNAP by measuring the State's compliance with certain standards contained in the Food and Nutrition Act and regulations. States are required under federal regulations to submit participation rates monthly. State-by-State information on participation is based on SNAP administrative data and Census Bureau survey data which is used to estimate the number of participants in each State. Hawaii's SNAP participation rate has increased every year since FY 2008. This information is considered official and made available on the federal web site and is used by DHS to establish policy and procedures under the guidance of FNS.
- (2) There are also challenges for the individual care providers, non-profit profit organizations, businesses, and faith-based organizations as well as the legislature receiving the individual reports. SNAP is required to protect the rights of employees, applicants and persons who participate in various programs in compliance with applicable civil rights laws and regulations. Would a criteria be used to assist agencies and other entities with determining which individual is provided with a SNAP application? Would profiling be used to identify the individual which may be perceived as discriminatory?

(3) Community agencies willing to participate in the SNAP expansion effort may withdraw their willingness to participate if they are burdened with safeguarding records for the eventual reporting of SNAP applications that must be made available to the Legislature and DHS upon request.

(3) A health care provider submitting personal information such as the names of patients who were provided with a SNAP application may raise HIPPA concerns.

Lastly, DHS is working on a strategy to transition the SNAP application process to the DHS Enterprise platform. Once implemented, an individual will be able to apply for SNAP and Medicaid benefits at the same time.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on this bill.