

BILL022(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 126

*BUDGET (BUD)

***BUDGET (BUD) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Mar 30, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Daniela Spoto	Email: daniela@hiappleseed.org	Zip: 96815
Representing: Hawaii Appleseed	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 27, 2026 @ 05:35 PM



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony in Support for Proposed Amendment to Bill 22
Relating to Kupuna feeding and social support programs
Honolulu City Council Special Meeting
Monday, March 30, 2026, at 10:00AM

Dear Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and members of the Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the Proposed Amendment to Bill 22, Relating to Kupuna feeding and social support programs. Hawai'i Appleseed advocates for services that allow all Hawai'i's residents to thrive, regardless of economic status.

Hawai'i's kūpuna already face some of the highest food costs in the nation, stretching fixed incomes across housing, medical bills and groceries. This amendment is an innovative and essential move to alleviate food insecurity for O'ahu's older adults, who face unique challenges in accessing food relative to other populations on our island.

Hawai'i's largest nutrition support program, SNAP, helps more than 33,000 Hawai'i seniors¹ afford nutritious foods—supporting overall health and providing flexibility, dignity, and the ability to choose culturally-relevant foods. However, new federal restrictions passed in Congress' One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) threatens to cut off access to an estimated 16,570 older adults in Hawai'i unless they can document 20 hours of work per week (based on April 2025 data from Hawai'i's SNAP office).

The City and County of Honolulu, like Hawai'i's other counties, has an overlooked but critical asset to alleviate this upcoming threat: its federally-designated Area Agency on Aging, known as the Elderly Affairs Division in the Department of Community Services. This office already administers a variety of programs tailored toward older adults, including home-delivered and congregate meals. Currently, these programs are funded through a mix of state and federal funds, which come with a number of restrictions that make it difficult to reach all of the island's seniors. This amendment would allow the City to expand these programs and tailor them to the specific needs of O'ahu's kupuna population.

The issue of senior hunger is complex, but can be alleviated with innovative tools and programs that address it from multiple angles. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Proposed Amendment to Bill 22. We are pleased that the Council is paying attention to improving food security. By investing in this initiative, we can create a stronger, healthier, and more equitable Hawai'i for generations to come.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) State Fact Sheet: Hawaii," accessed March 27, 2026