



# Community Power in Action: Shaping Health Policy Together

Kevin Ramirez  
Kris Coffield  
Nate Hix



# Advocacy





A woman with short, wavy grey hair, wearing a grey polo shirt with a small logo on the chest and black pants, stands on the left. She is smiling and has an orange wristband on her left wrist.

A woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing a green blazer, a white floral headband, and a long white lei, sits in a black leather chair. She is smiling and has her hands resting on her lap.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue polo shirt with a logo on the chest and black pants, stands in the center. She is smiling and holding a clipboard with a sign that reads "FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL KEIKI" and "#meals4allHI".

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue polo shirt with a logo on the chest and black pants, stands on the right. She is smiling and holding a booklet titled "2025 PUBLIC HEALTH AGENDA". The booklet features a collage of images related to public health.

We're not Gossiping  
We're Networking

OUT

HAMAKUA  
MACADAMIA

**HAWAII PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE**

## Universal Free School Meals

Universal free school meals would ensure all K-12 students are offered free breakfast and lunch at school, regardless of household income.

**Addressing Food Insecurity**

For many families, the cost of school meals can be a barrier to accessing the balanced meals their children need. Hunger and inadequate nutrition are associated with stress, depression, and chronic disease.

**Universal free school meals can provide meals to students who may otherwise not eat at all.**

**Studies show free school meals have led to large test score improvements in K-12 students.**

**Improved Academic Performance**

Schools that implemented free school meals saw Math and English test scores increase at a rate equivalent to attending six additional weeks of school.

**Financial Impact of Universal Free School Meals in Hawai'i**

While six additional weeks of school would cost Hawai'i \$300 million annually, universal free school meals would cost Hawai'i only \$21 million annually.

**Learn More** | Visit [hiphi.org/policy](http://hiphi.org/policy)  
Contact Nate Hix at [nate@hiphi.org](mailto:nate@hiphi.org)

**2 out of 3** struggling families are **ineligible** for free school meals.

**Cost of Raising Test Scores**

Category	Cost
6 Weeks of School	\$300M
Free School Meals	\$21M

**HAWAII PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE**

## LET'S PASS SB1300!

Thousands of families cannot afford basic needs in Hawai'i, but earn too much to qualify for free school meals. Passing SB 1300 can help vulnerable families.

**"It would help me and my family when we are struggling to get by."**

Expanding Free School Meals	Reduced Price Students	Households Earning up to 300% FPL
Estimated Annual Cost	\$565,000	\$3.4 Million

- 1 in 3 families face food insecurity every year
- 82% of voters support free school meals for all keiki

**@freeschoolmealshawaii**

**HAWAII PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE**

## EXPANDING FREE SCHOOL MEALS SB 1300

**WHY NOW?**

Thousands of families cannot afford life in Hawai'i, but earn too much to qualify for free school meals. Expanding free school meals via SB 1300 can help the families most in need.

Expanding Free School Meals	Reduced Price Students	Households Earning up to 300% FPL	All Students
Estimated Annual Cost	\$565,000	\$3.4 Million	\$22 Million

**BENEFITS**

- Higher test scores
- Better attendance
- Fewer behavioral issues
- Improved health

**NEED AND SUPPORT**

- 1 in 3 families face food insecurity every year
- 82% of voters support free school meals for all keiki
- 8 states provide free school meals to all students

**"It would help me and my family when we are struggling to get by." - Local Parent**

**@freeschoolmealshawaii**  
**nate@hiphi.org**



FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR  
ALL KEIKI

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#meals4allHI #meals4allkeiki



# State officials discuss expansion of free school meals



SB1300 would require the state DOE to appropriate funding for meals for students who come from income restrained households.



Farmer

Student

Student

Student

Non-profit

Parent

Community

Union

Student

Non-profit

Student

Non-profit





Community Voice

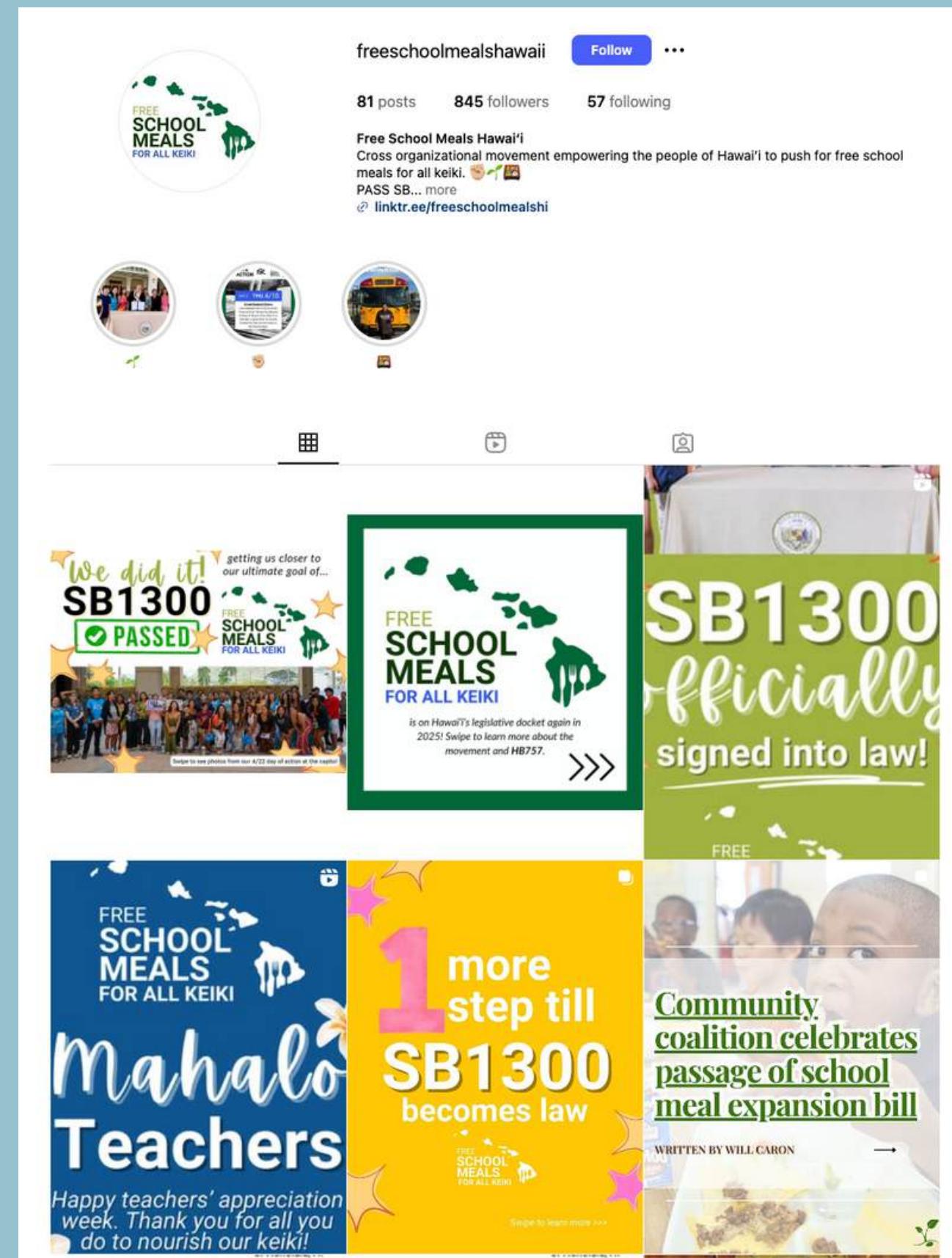
# Passing Free School Meals Would Uplift Vulnerable Keiki

The Legislature can appropriate funding by passing Senate Bill 1300, which would extend free school meals to children from ALICE households.

By Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, Jennifer Kagiwada, Fern Anuenue Holland

April 23, 2025 · 4 min read







# ACTION ALERT

HAWAII PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

Aloha Nate,

We are in the final days of conference committee, when House and Senate members meet to negotiate the final text of bills for this year's legislative session. [SB 1300](#), our free school meals proposal, must pass by this Friday or it will not move forward this session.

**Please [ask the conferees to pass SB 1300](#)** to provide free meals to financially vulnerable students. Click the button below to send an email in less than a minute.

By contacting our legislators about this important measure, you are helping to end child hunger on our shores.

**CONTACT CONFEREES TODAY!**



PLEASE  
SUPPORT  
FREESCHOOL MEALS  
SB1300



FREE  
**SCHOOL  
MEALS**  
FOR ALL KEIKI

 SUPPORT

I support free  
school meals

**SB1300**

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[@freeschoolmealshawaii](https://www.instagram.com/freeschoolmealshawaii)





**LA CHIC**  
Representative/37th Distr

Assistant Majority Floor Leader  
Vice  
Chair, Committee on Education



HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III  
Senator / District 4

Assistant Majority Whip  
Chair, Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

OPEN — E KOMO MAI

202



**GARNER M. SHIMIZU**  
Representative/32nd District

OPEN

E KOMO MAI  
DOOR CLOSED TO SAVE ENERGY



**AMY A. PERRUSO**  
Representative/46th District

Majority Whip  
Vice  
Chair: Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection



**CHRISTOPHER L. MURAOKA**  
Representative/45th District

OPEN

E KOMO MAI  
DOOR CLOSED TO SAVE ENERGY

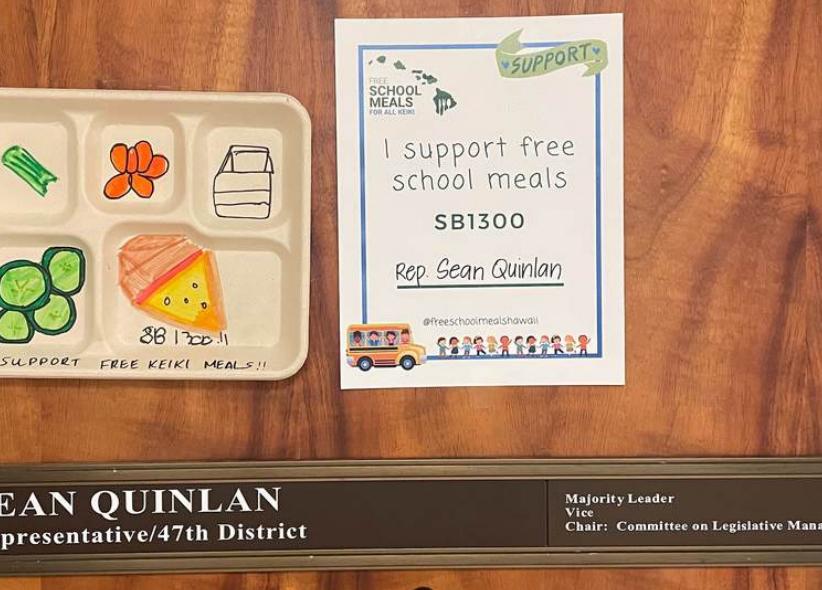


**IKAIKA HUSSEY**  
Representative/29th District  
Vice  
Chair: Committee on Economic Development & Technology

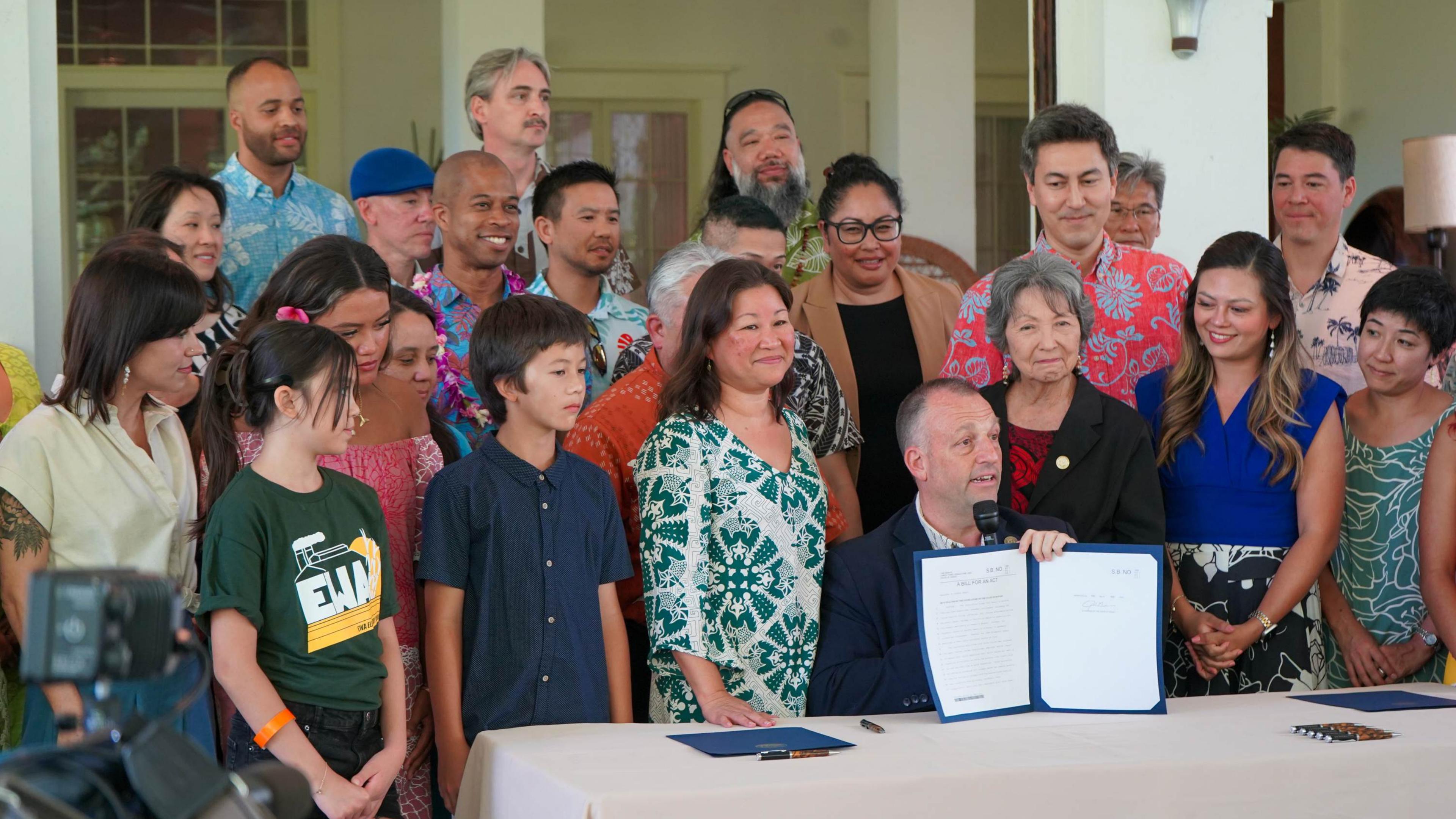


**MAHINA POEPOE**  
Representative/13th District  
Vice  
Chair: Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

OPEN  
E KOMO MAI  
DOOR CLOSED TO SAVE ENERGY









# Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Fee



340,000



The precursor to  
Big Tobacco

## Funding Wellness

**\$ .02 per ounce  
= \$66 MILLION  
for health**

# Health Impacts

- Type 2 diabetes
- Heart disease
- Weight gain
- Liver disease
- Tooth decay



## Health Benefits

- Reduce Type 2 Diabetes
- Save \$60 mil on care costs
- Lower gestational diabetes by 41 percent
- 29 percent fewer oral health hospitalizations for keiki



**Success in Philly: 34  
percent tooth decay  
drop for low SES  
families**

# Revenue Uses

- Food access
- Healthcare
- Oral hygiene
- Early learning
- Regenerative Ag
- SNAP/Medicaid cuts



## Berkeley, CA:

- 52% SSB drop
- 29% more water consumption



7.2% boost in food  
sector jobs





# Legislative Support

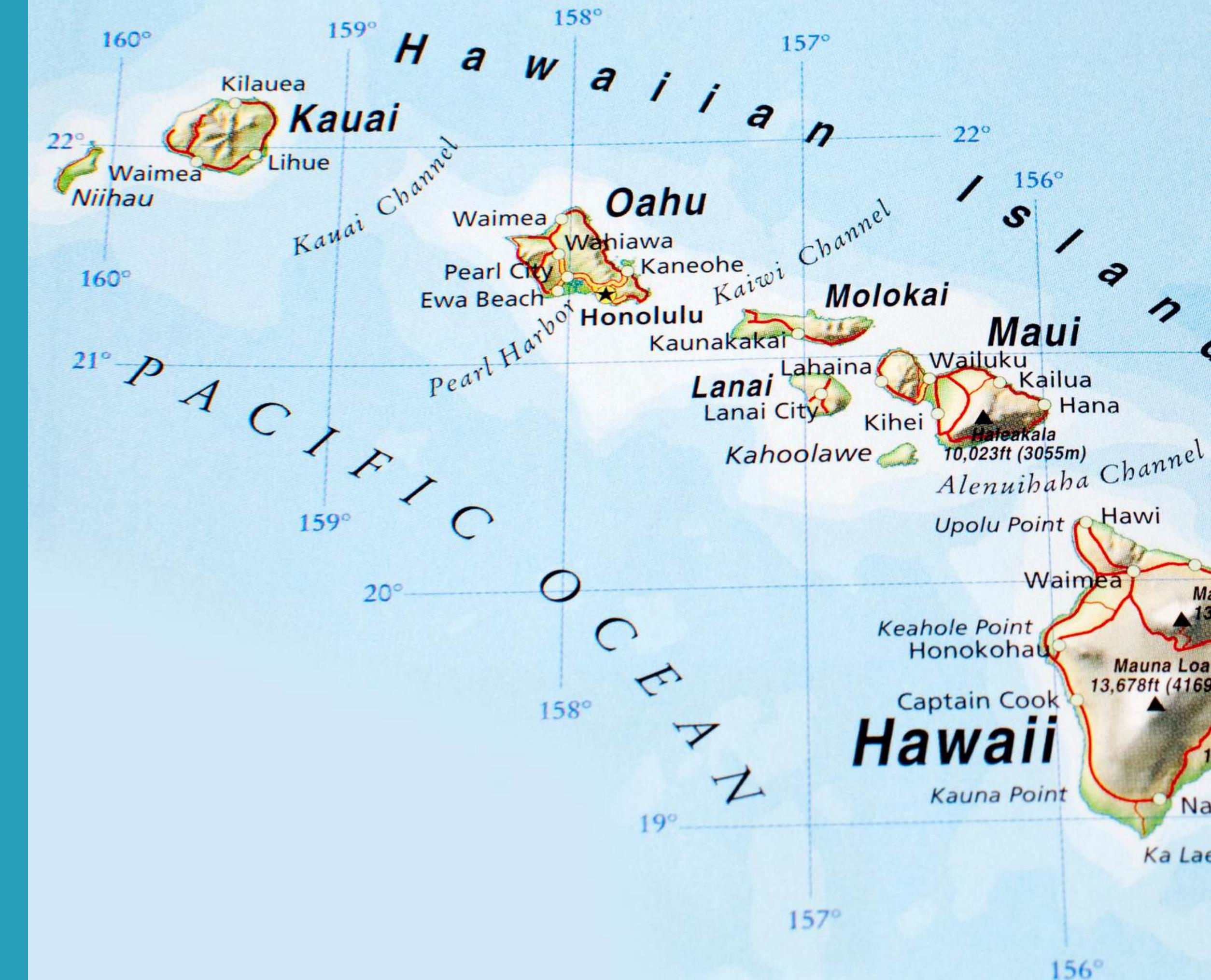
**Speaker Nakamura**  
**Rep. Matayoshi**  
**Rep. Kapela**  
**Rep. Marten**  
**Sen. Rhoads**  
**Sen. Chang**  
**and more!**

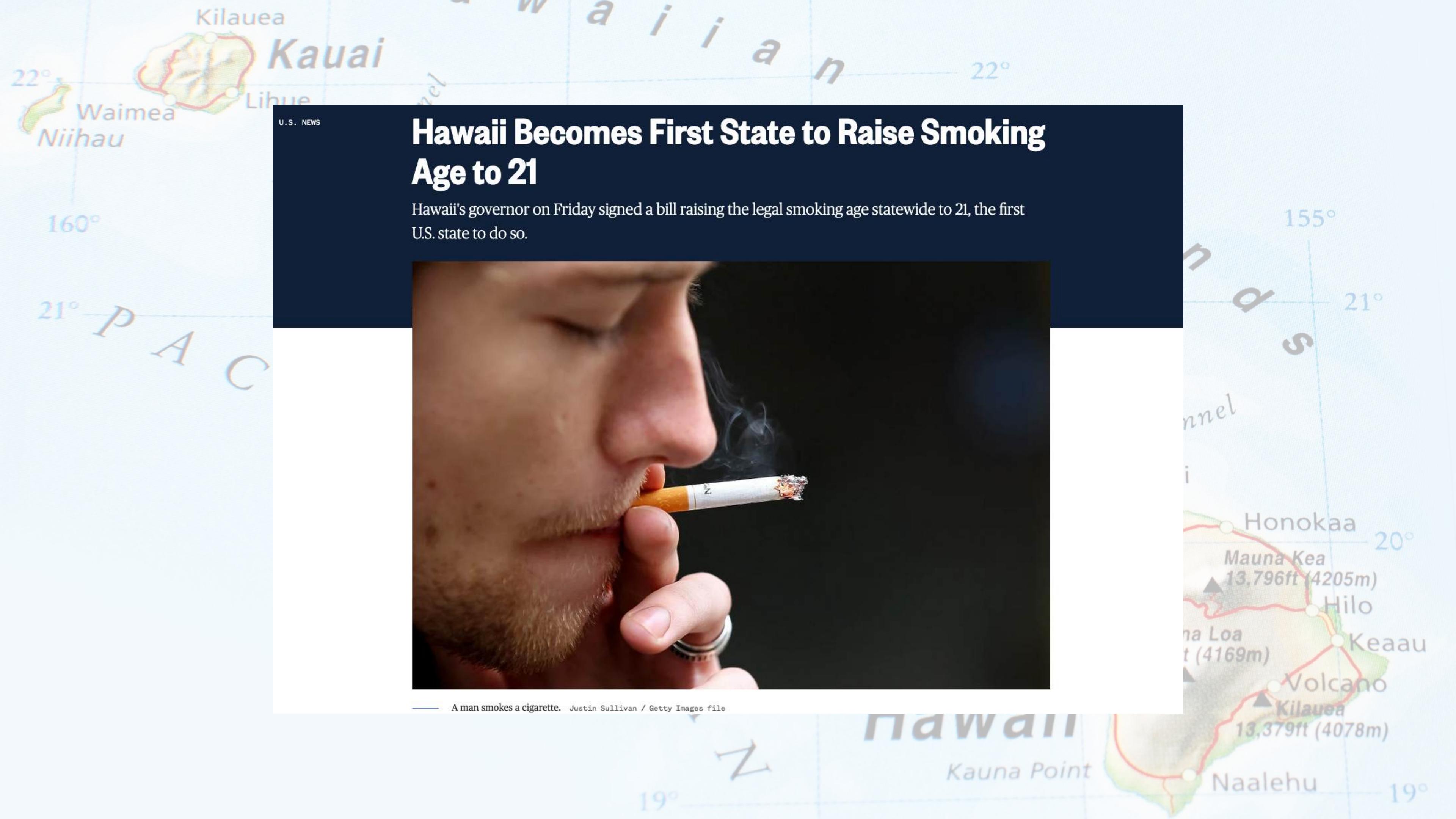


Mahalo, DOH!

# Restore County Authority for Tobacco Sales

- Counties have led the charge on tobacco policy
- Their authority was removed in 2018





## Hawaii Becomes First State to Raise Smoking Age to 21

Hawaii's governor on Friday signed a bill raising the legal smoking age statewide to 21, the first U.S. state to do so.



A man smokes a cigarette. Justin Sullivan / Getty Images file



## US raises legal age to buy tobacco products to 21



A federal spending bill to fund the government also raises the age to buy tobacco products to 21 across the country. (Source: CNN) (GIM)

Published: Dec. 21, 2019 at 11:34 AM HST

[Email](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Pinterest](#) [LinkedIn](#)

A new federal law sets the minimum age to buy tobacco products at 21.



# 1 in 3 Face Food Insecurity



# Why Hunger?

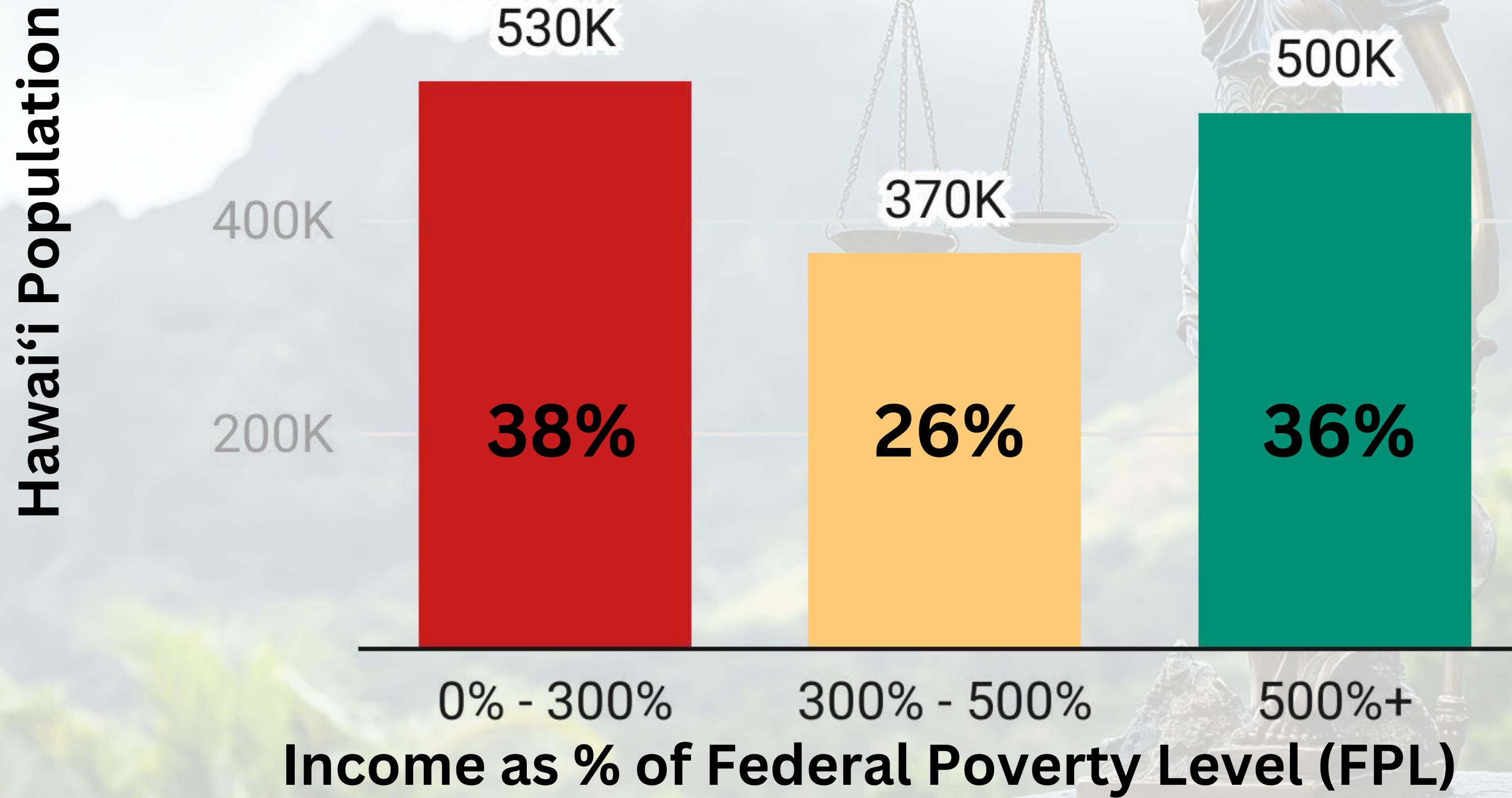


# Income Needed for Self-Sufficiency



Household Size	300% FPL
1	\$54,000
2	\$72,972
3	\$91,980
4	\$110,952

# More than 1 in 3 Households in Hawai‘i have Incomes Below 300% of the FPL



# What is SNAP?

Supplemental  
Nutrition  
Assistance  
Program

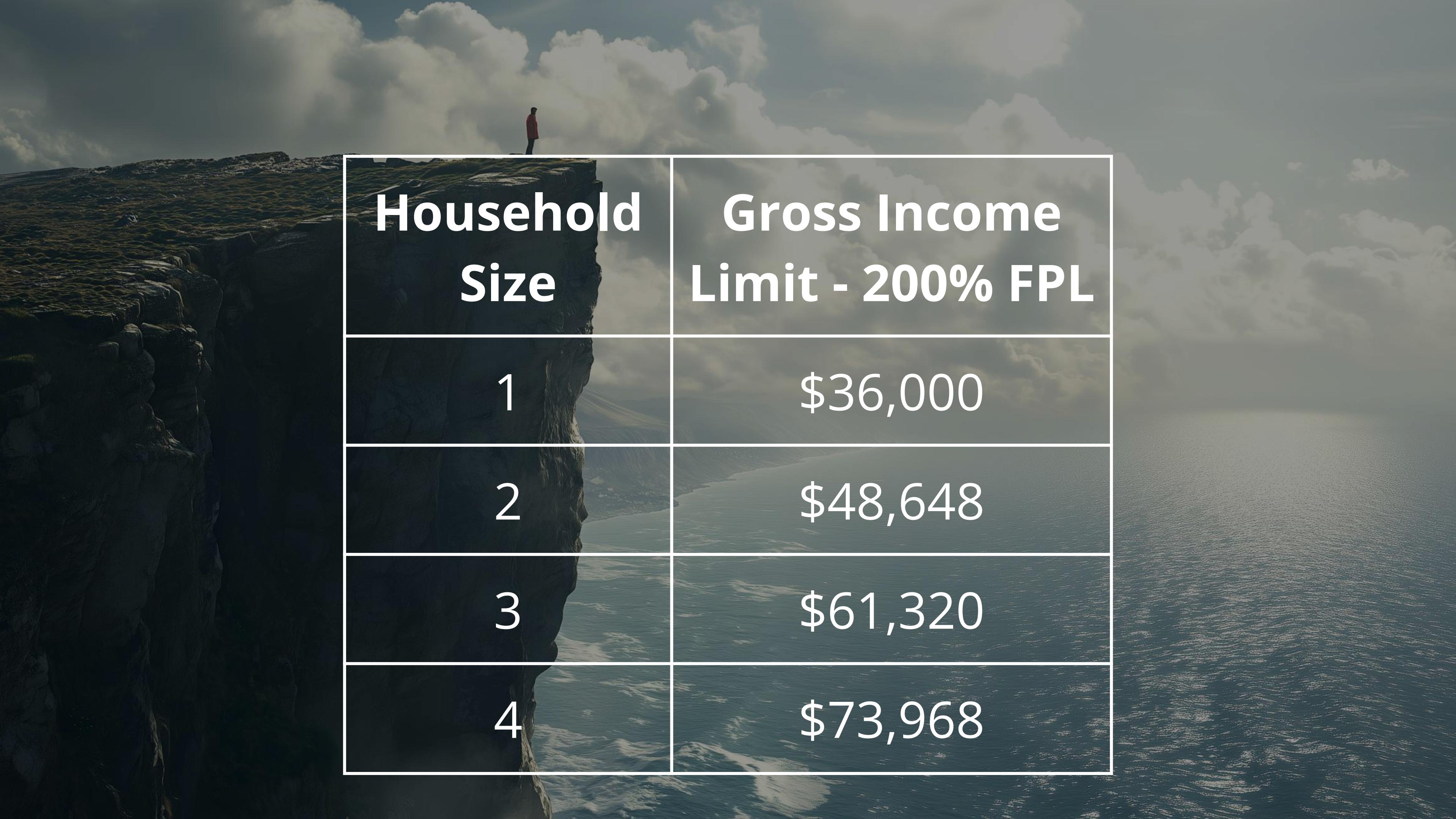


# SNAP Enrollment

66,000 Families Enrolled



\$336 Average Monthly Benefit per Person



# Household Size

# Gross Income Limit - 200% FPL

1

\$36,000

2

\$48,648

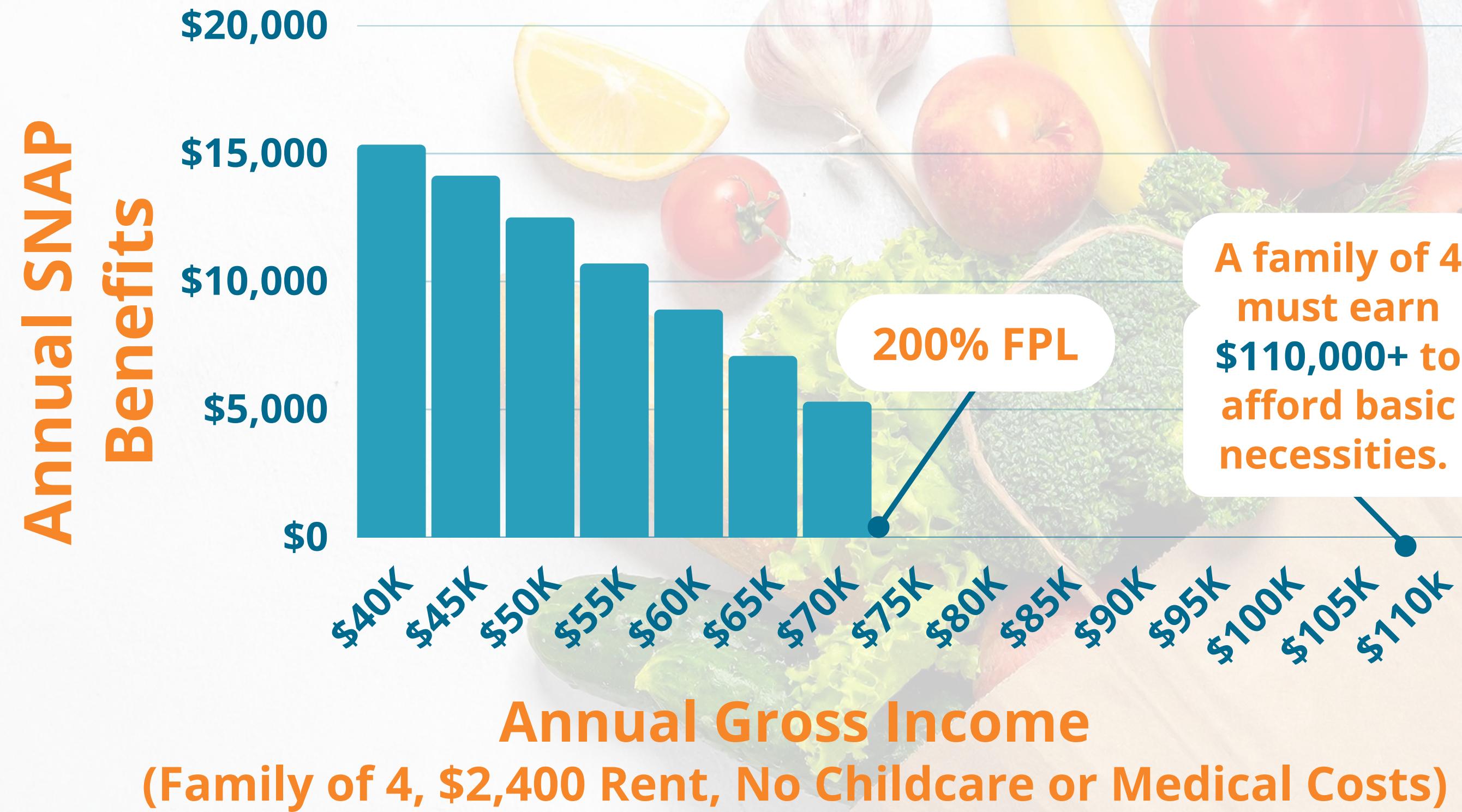
3

\$61,320

4

\$73,968

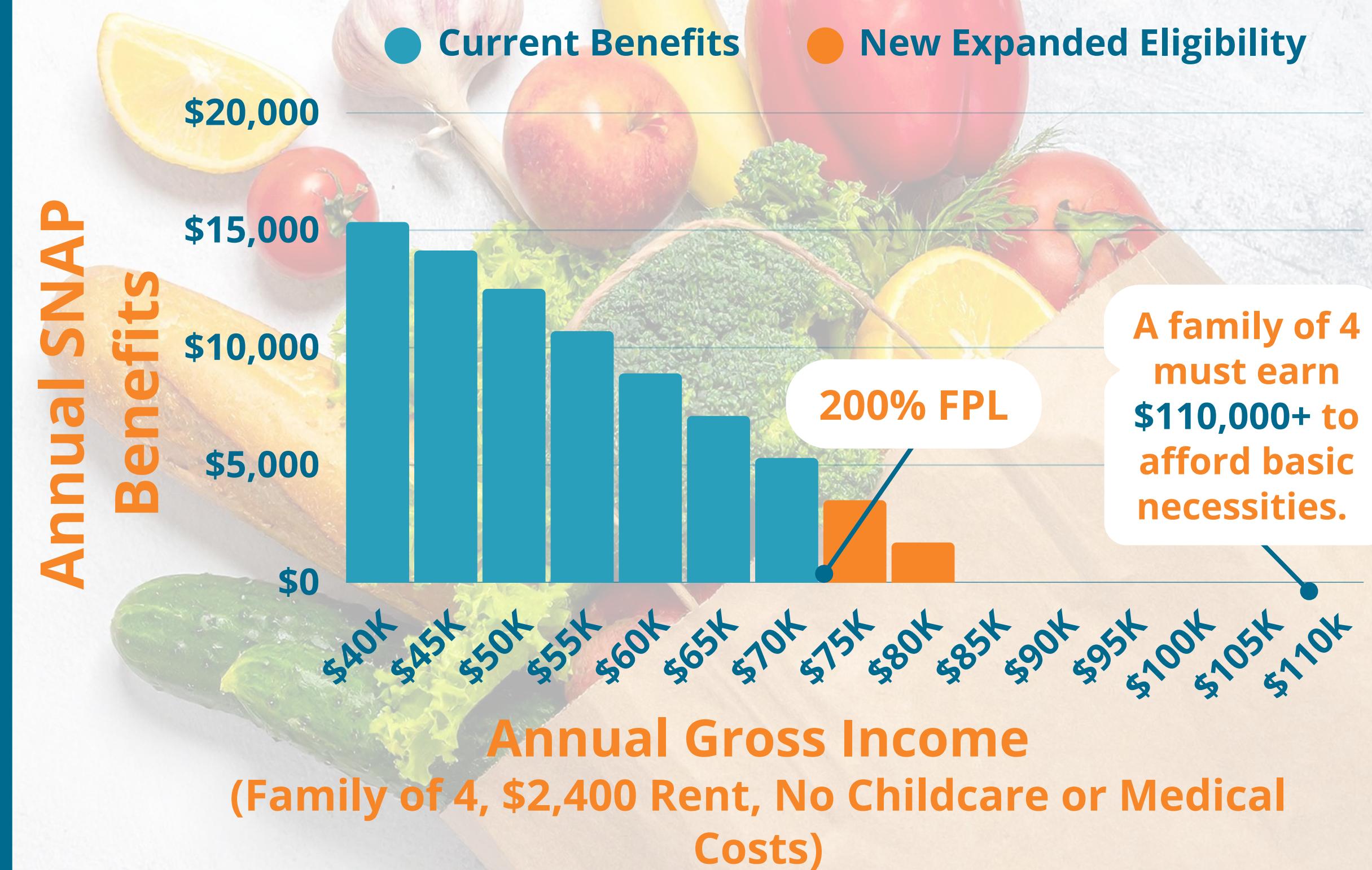
# Current SNAP Benefits



# SNAP Expansion

- Expand SNAP eligibility to all families earning up to 300% of FPL
- Many are ineligible due to citizenship, work or income requirements.

## Proposed SNAP Benefits



# Annual Food Assistance

\$700 Million  
\$600 Million  
\$500 Million  
\$400 Million  
\$300 Million  
\$200 Million  
\$100 Million  
\$0 Million

**\$680  
Million**

**\$45  
Million**

**\$60  
Million**

**\$40  
Million**

**SNAP**

**Expanded SNAP**

**School Meals**

**Food Bank**



# How to Help

- Policy wins require lots of support
- Dozens of ways to help push these efforts forward



# How to Help

- Policy wins require lots of support
- Dozens of ways to help push these efforts forward



SNAP

Sugary Drinks

Tobacco



# Feedback Please!

