



# Community Power in Action: Shaping Health Policy Together

Kevin Ramirez  
Kris Coffield  
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HAWAII'  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH  
INSTITUTE



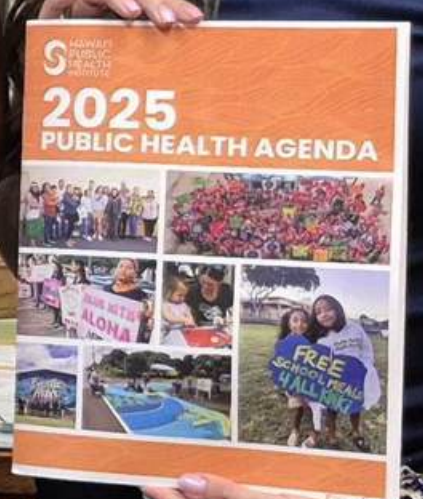
# Advocacy







We're not Gossiping  
We're Networking







# 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.

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

## 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.

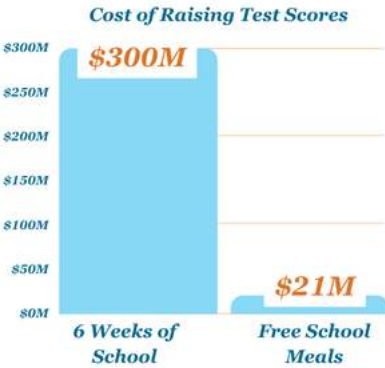
Studies show free school meals have led to large test score improvements in K-12 students.

## 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](https://hiphi.org/policy)  
Contact Nate Hix at [nate@hiphi.org](mailto:nate@hiphi.org)



# 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



# 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](mailto:nate@hiphi.org)





FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR  
ALL KEIKI

*#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

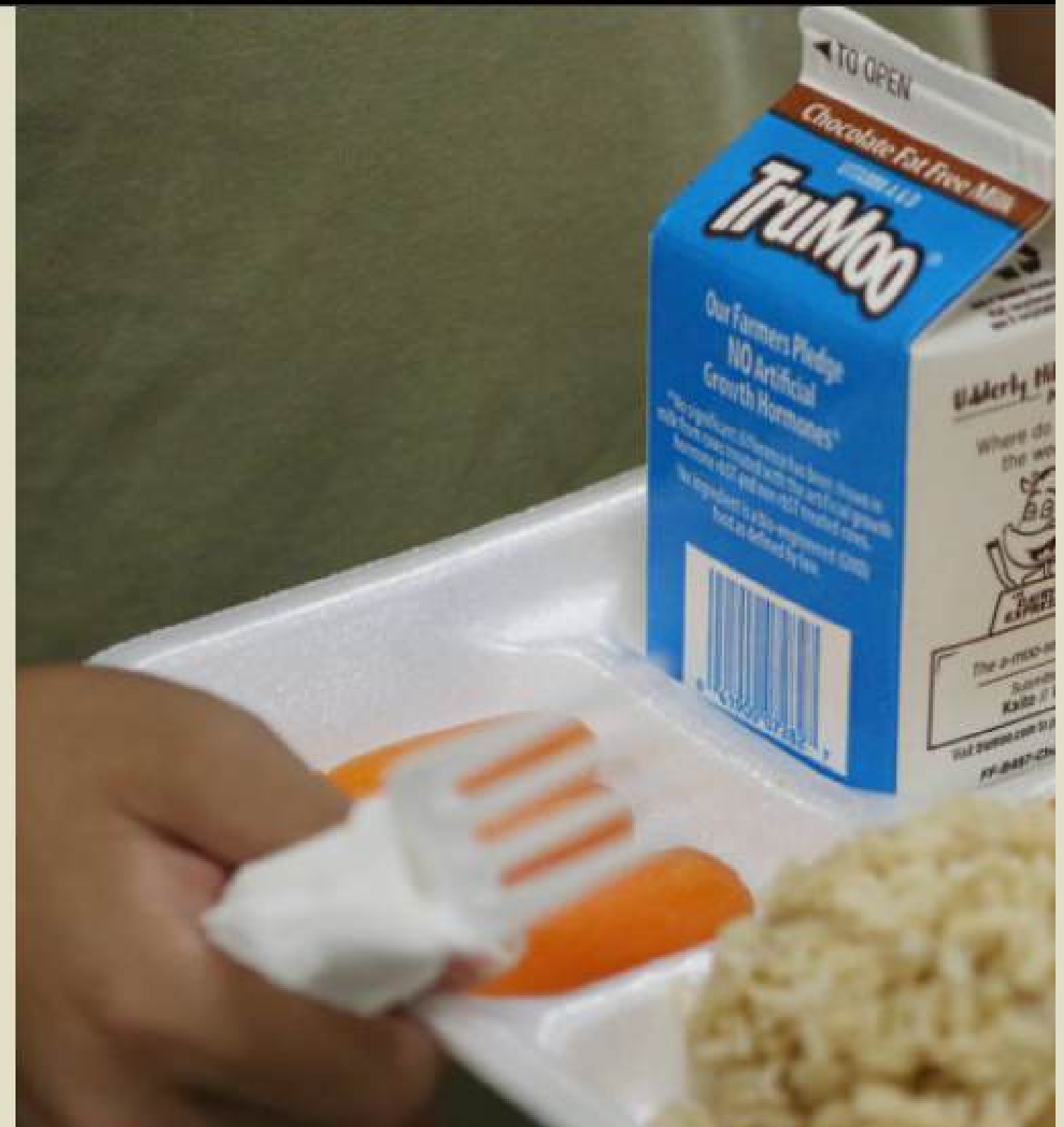
The Legislature can appropriate funding by passing Senate Bill 1300, which would extend free school meals to children from ALICE households.

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

April 23, 2025 · 4 min read



12







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Free School Meals Hawai'i  
Cross organizational movement empowering the people of Hawai'i to push for free school meals for all keiki. 🌱🍲  
PASS SB... more  
[linktr.ee/freeschoolmealshi](https://linktr.ee/freeschoolmealshi)







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!**





poke



ulu



maia



nola



PLEASE  
SUPPORT  
FREESCHOOL MEALS  
SB1300





I support free  
school meals

**SB1300**



@freeschoolmealshawaii









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

SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*Garner M. Shimizu*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

MAHALO!

**MATTHIAS KUSCH**  
Representative/1st District  
Vice Chair: Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

OPEN E KOMO MAI  
DOOR CLOSED TO SAVE ENERGY

SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*Rep Matthias Kusch*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

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

OPEN E KOMO MAI  
DOOR CLOSED TO SAVE ENERGY

SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*[Signature]*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

SB 1300 support free school meals!!

**MIKE LEE**  
Representative/50th District  
Vice Chair: Committee on Labor

Open Door Slowly

BIG TOBACCO MONEY  
STOPS HERE.

NO HOTELS NO HAWAII  
HAWAII'S HOUSING HERO:  
*Anna Perruso*  
I TOOK THE PLEDGE IN SUPPORT OF SB2915 TO PROTECT HAWAII'S NEIGHBORHOODS

SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*Anna Perruso*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

**AMY A. PERRUSO**  
Representative/46th District  
Majority Whip  
Vice Chair: Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*[Signature]*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

Absolutely NO  
Lobbyist Gifts

BIG TOBACCO MONEY  
STOPS HERE.

**TEREZ AMATO**  
Representative/11th District  
Vice Chair: Committee on Higher Education

I PLEDGE TO BE AN ALLY TO OUR LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

I STANDED WITH PLANNED PARENTHOOD

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

SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*Ikaika Hussey*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

**ELLE COCHRAN**  
Representative/14th District

SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*Elle Cochran*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

E Komo Mai  
Please come in

SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*[Signature]*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

**SUE L. KEOHOKAPU-LEE LOY**  
Representative/2nd District  
Vice Chair: Committee on Health

FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL KEIKI  
#meals4allHI

ATTACHED TO SCHOOL:  
KEIKI WIN  
KUMU WIN  
KULA WIN  
MAHALE WIN  
KAIAULU WINS  
AINA WINS

We love a leader who extends cheer, justice, and healthcare pleas! Thanks for what you do!!  
*La Chica Trish*  
State Capital Room 401  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**TRISH LA CHICA**  
Representative/37th District  
Assistant Majority Floor Leader  
Vice Chair: Committee on Education

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

OPEN E KOMO MAI  
DOOR CLOSED TO SAVE ENERGY

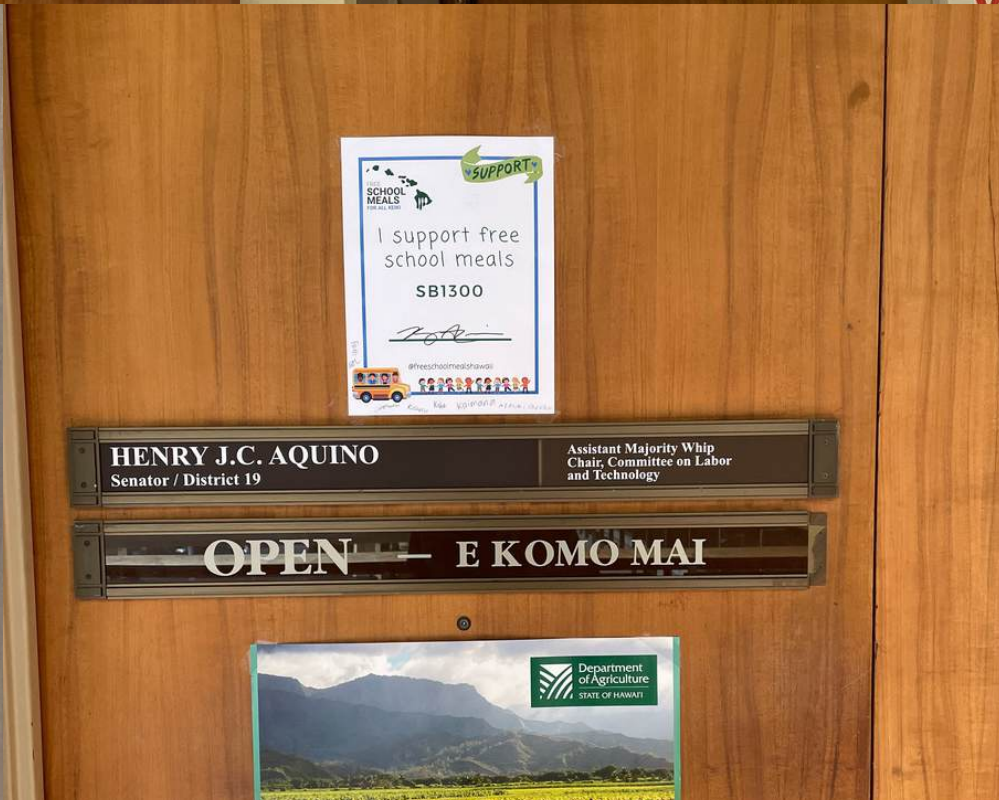
SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
representative  
*Mahina Poepeoe*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

SUPPORT FREE KEIKI MEALS!!

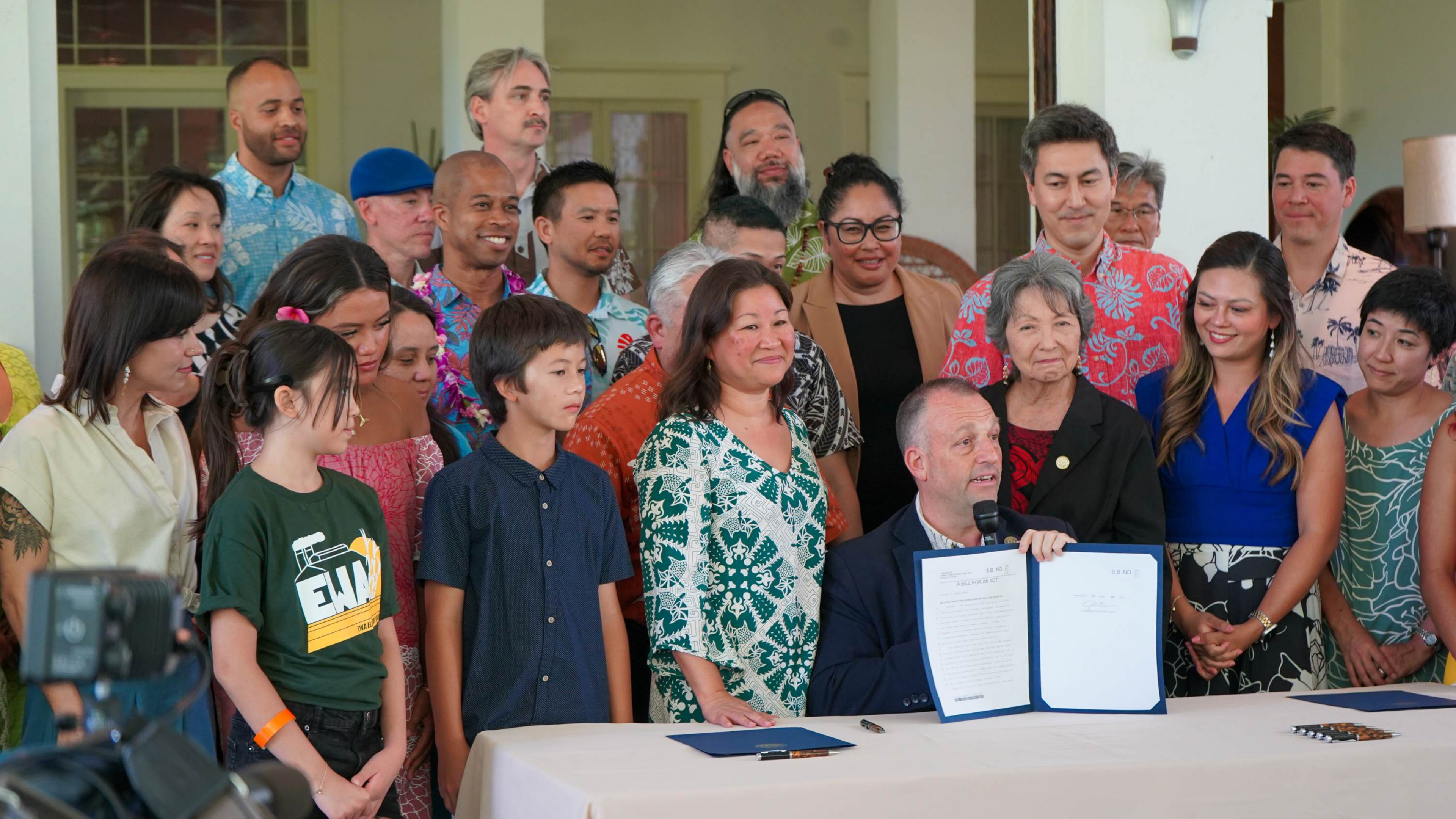
SUPPORT  
I support free school meals  
SB1300  
*Rep Sean Quinlan*  
@freeschoolmeals4hawaii

**SEAN QUINLAN**  
Representative/47th District  
Majority Leader  
Vice Chair: Committee on Legislative Management











The background of the image is a dense collection of plastic bottles, likely soda or sports drinks. The bottles are filled with a bright orange liquid. They all have green screw-on caps. The bottles are arranged in rows, with some in the foreground being more in focus than others in the background. A semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.


# **Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Fee**



340,000





A close-up photograph of a large pile of discarded cigarette butts and ash. The butts are mostly orange-brown with some white filter visible. They are scattered on a dark, textured surface, likely a tray or container. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture of the ash and the paper of the cigarettes.

# **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**



The sign features a logo at the top consisting of a circle with a stylized 'Z' or 'B' inside, crossed out with a diagonal line. Below the logo, the text 'WE ARE HIRING!' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Underneath this, a list of job roles is written in smaller white capital letters, each preceded by a dot. At the bottom, the text 'AM & PM AVAILABLE' is written, with 'Full & Part Time' written below it in even smaller letters.

**WE ARE  
HIRING!**

· DISHWASHERS  
· PREP COOKS  
· LINE COOKS

AM & PM AVAILABLE  
Full & Part Time



The background image shows a large, modern legislative chamber. It features tiered wooden seating for the public or press, and a curved wooden desk with black leather chairs for the legislative members. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting and large windows on the left side. The text is overlaid on a dark brown semi-transparent box on the right side of the image.

# **Legislative Support**

**Speaker Nakamura**

**Rep. Matayoshi**

**Rep. Kapela**

**Rep. Marten**

**Sen. Rhoads**

**Sen. Chang**

**and more!**



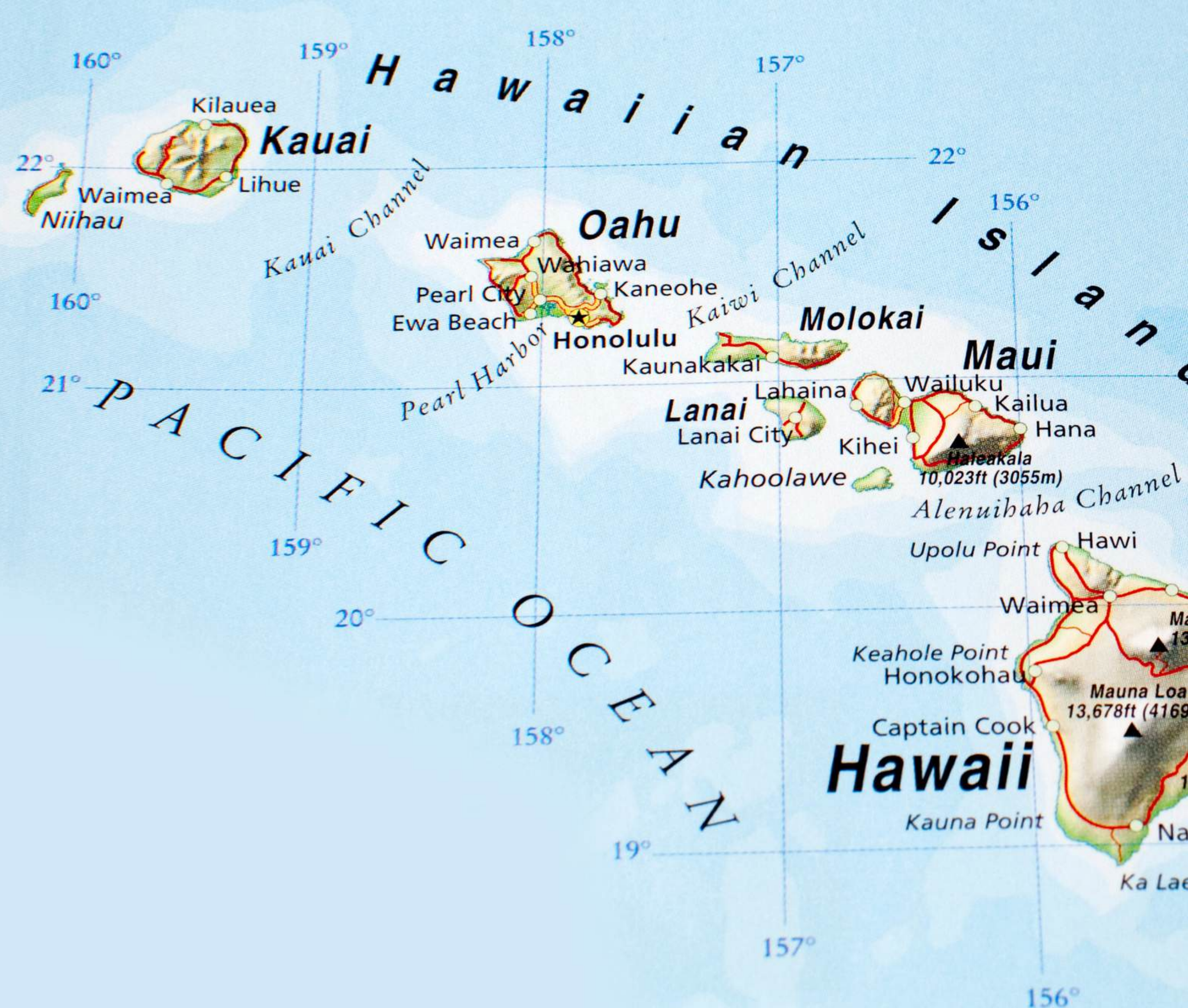
**Mahalo, DOH!**





# Restore County Authority for Tobacco Sales

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





U.S. NEWS

# 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



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



# Counties are closer to getting back authority over tobacco regulations

Hawai'i Public Radio | By [Mark Ladao](#)  
Published February 14, 2025 at 3:07 PM HST



▶ LISTEN • 1:17



Patrick Sison/AP / AP

FILE - Cigarettes on Dec. 17, 2019. (AP Photo/Patrick Sison, File)

Want to pass strict tobacco laws in Hawai'i? Let the counties do it. That's what health care experts, students and even county councilmembers are asking the state to do.



# 1 in 3 Face Food Insecurity





# Why Hunger?







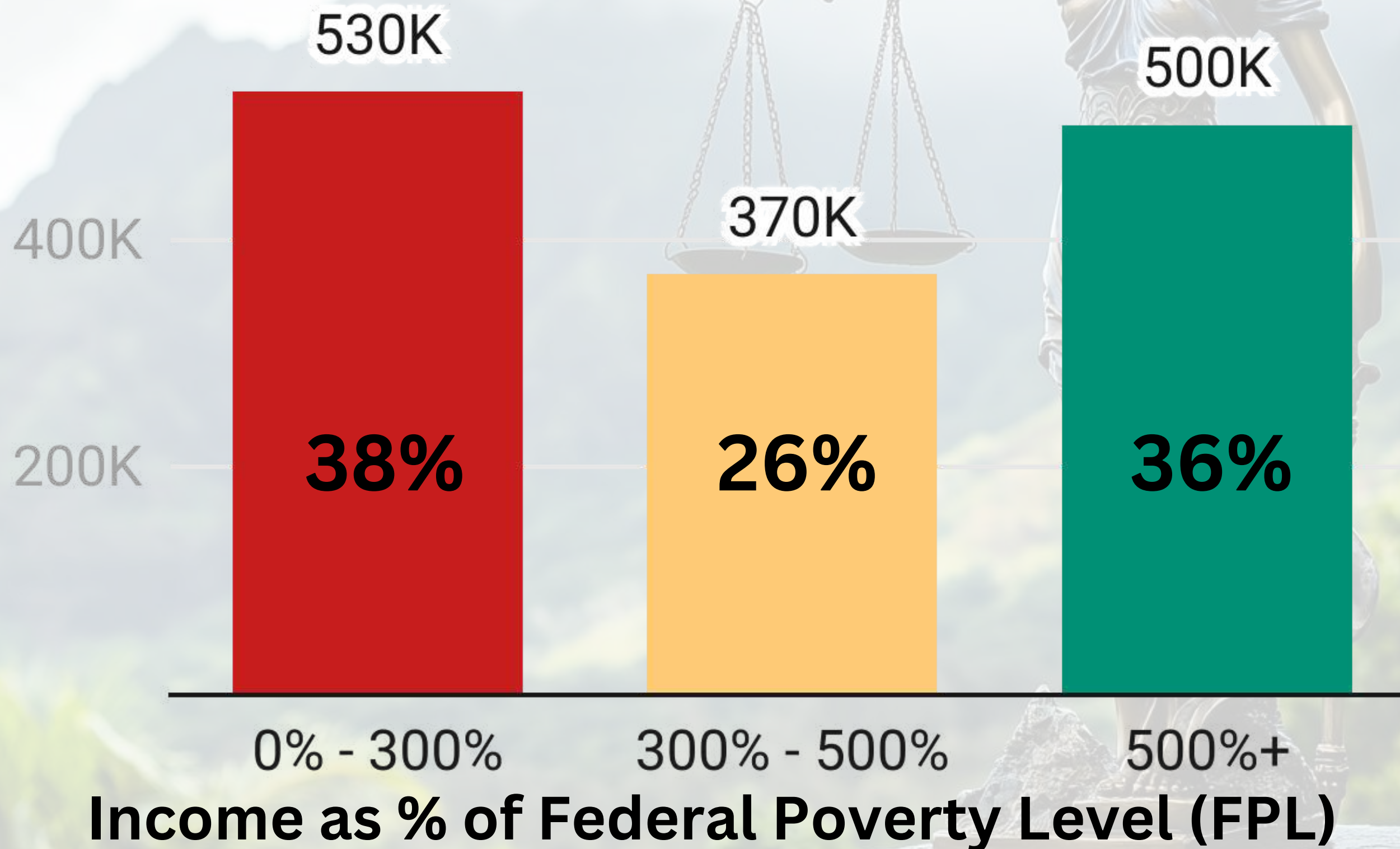
# Income Needed for Self-Sufficiency

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

Hawai'i Population





# What is SNAP?

**Supplemental  
Nutrition  
Assistance  
Program**





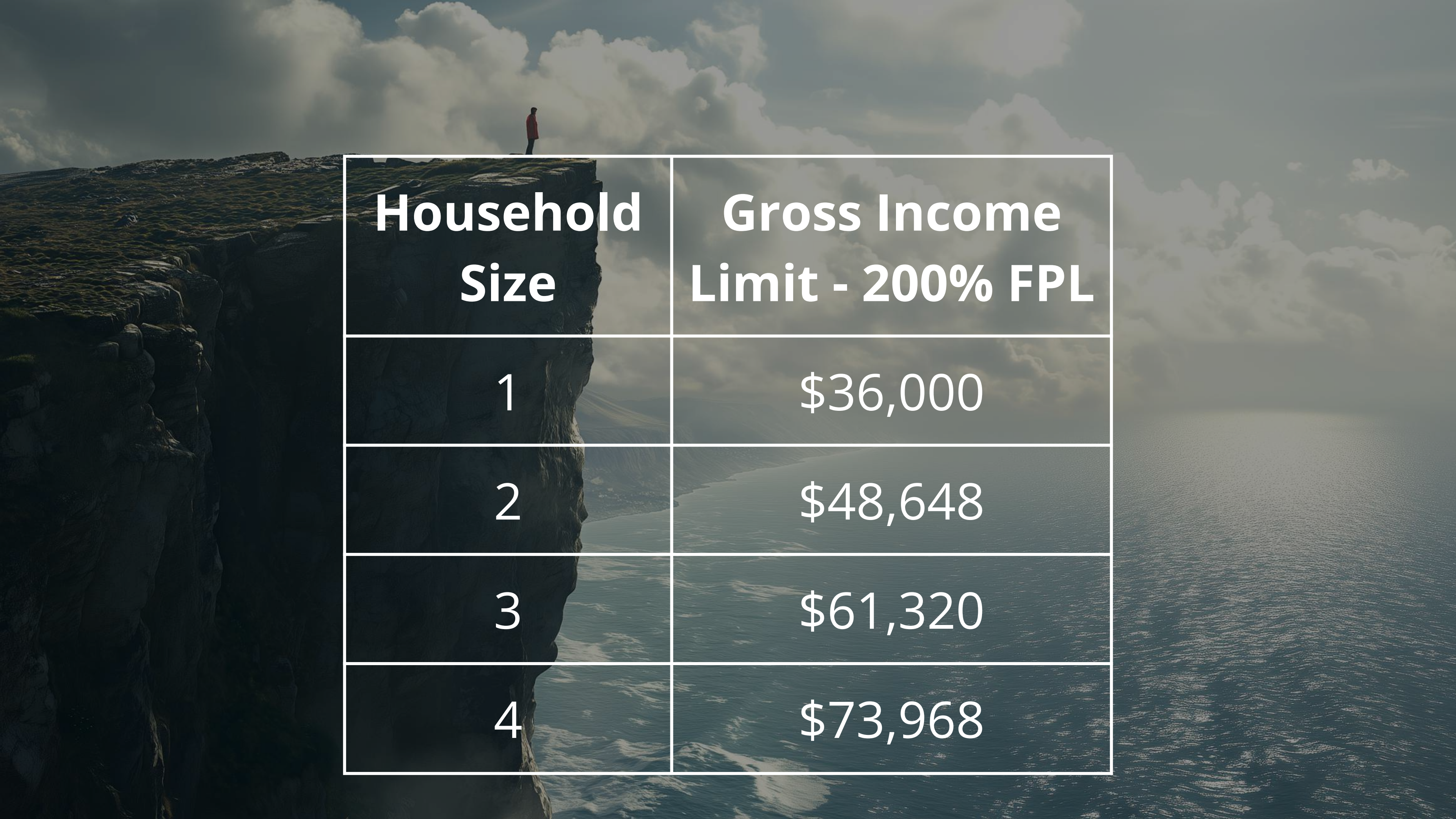
# SNAP Enrollment

66,000 Families Enrolled



\$336 Average Monthly Benefit per Person



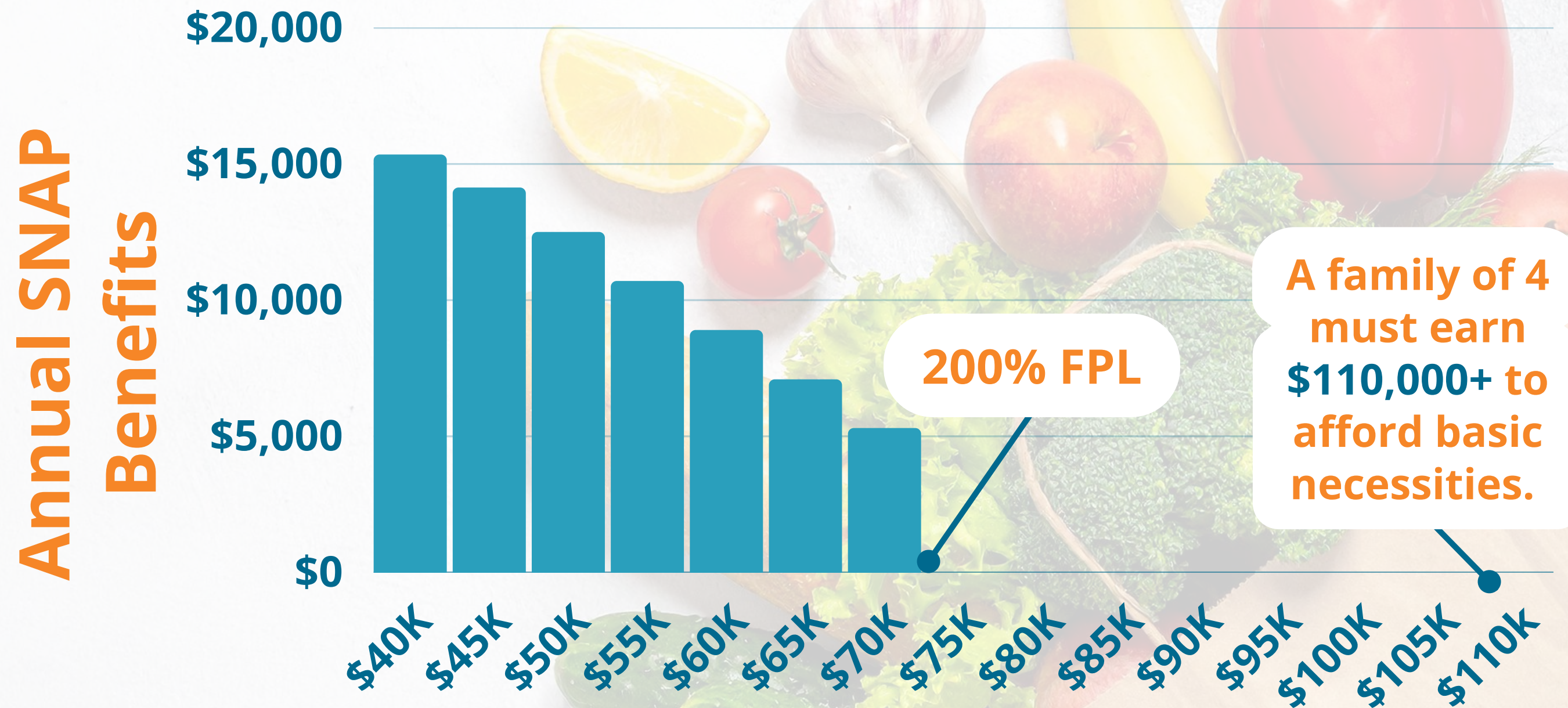


A person in a red jacket stands on the edge of a dark, rocky cliff. The cliff face is rugged and steep, dropping down to a deep blue ocean. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. The overall scene is dramatic and evocative, suggesting a high-stakes or precarious situation.

Household Size	Gross Income Limit - 200% FPL
1	\$36,000
2	\$48,648
3	\$61,320
4	\$73,968



# Current SNAP Benefits



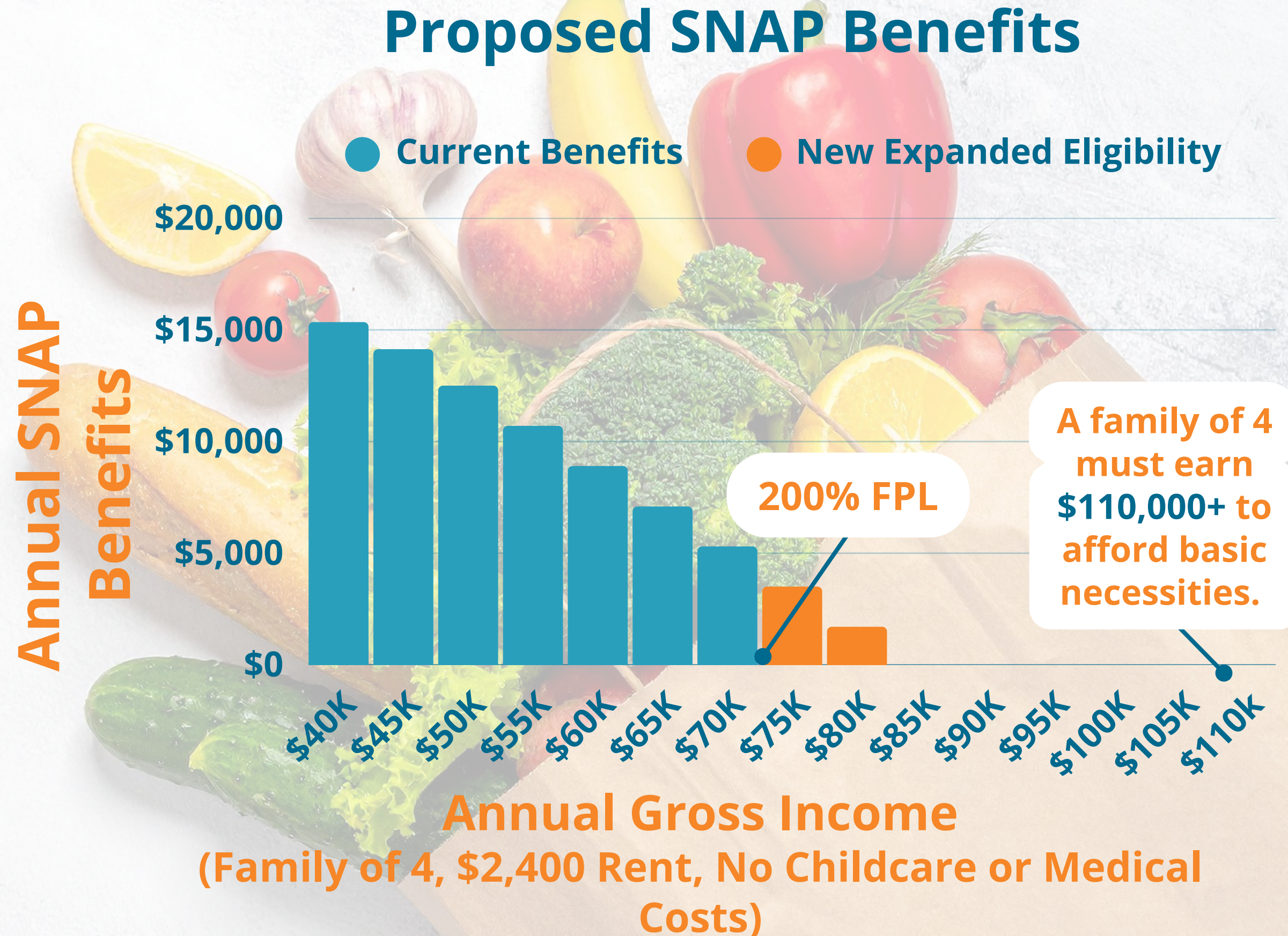
**Annual Gross Income**

**(Family of 4, \$2,400 Rent, No Childcare or Medical Costs)**



# SNAP Expansion

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





# Annual Food Assistance

\$700 Million

\$600 Million

\$500 Million

\$400 Million

\$300 Million

\$200 Million

\$100 Million

\$0 Million

**\$680  
Million**

**SNAP**

**\$45  
Million**

**Expanded SNAP**

**\$60  
Million**

**School Meals**

**\$40  
Million**

**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!

