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The Honorable City Council
 City and County of Honolulu
 Council Chamber
 Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 10:00AM

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 CITY CLERK
 HONOLULU, HAWAII

Subject: Proposed Budget Bill 11 (2013), CD2 for Fiscal Year 2014

Dear Chair Martin and Council Members:

Two years ago I started working as the Registered Dietitian for the Meals on Wheels program. Although I had worked as a dietitian for 10 years, this was my first experience with a non-profit community nutrition program. I was truly in for an education and an eye-opening experience. I found that with each home visit I made, one thing became abundantly clear: many of our kupuna would go hungry or become malnourished without the one nutritious meal provided by the Meals on Wheels program.

It is not usual for me to walk into a senior's home, find them living alone with little assistance. Many suffer from multiple chronic illnesses which prevent them from being able to do many tasks, including cooking, shopping or even feeding themselves. Take for instance a stroke victim that has residual paralysis to one side of their body. It's a difficult task just to stand in the kitchen and hold open a refrigerator door to find something to eat. A senior with chronic lung disease, may suffer from shortness of breath or exhaustion, just with the task of feeding themselves.

For many of our seniors, a day's worth of meals may be a bowl of whatever cereal is on sale, usually sugary, and milk for breakfast, a can of soup or easily microwavable store bought meal for lunch, both containing excessive sodium and then 5 days each week receiving one meal from MOW that is their most nutritious of the day. When seniors do obtain groceries, often times it is items that are cheap and convenient. Unfortunately, this usually goes hand-in-hand with high sodium/fat/sugar intake which in turn affects their health. A continued decline in health and the ability to care for themselves breeds a greater dependence on programs such as ours.

In addition to chronic illness and lack of access to healthy foods, other financial concerns are also affecting their food intake. I have even encountered situations where seniors will not use the appliances in their homes, such as stoves, because the cost associated with running these appliances is excessive.

The Meals on Wheels program provides at least one healthy, well-rounded meal each weekday to help our seniors stay healthy. Unfortunately for some, this is the only meal they get each day and for many, the only fruit, vegetable and milk serving of the day. This program is vital to our community, not only in terms of

providing a nutritious meal but in terms of keeping our seniors healthy and giving them the ability to live independently as long as they can.

Please support the proposed budget Bill 11 (2013), CD2. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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