



# HAWAI' APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

For Immediate Release  
February 9, 2016

Contact  
Gavin Thornton, Co-Executive Director  
(808) 587-7605  
gavin@hiappleseed.org

### HALF OF HAWAI'TS RESIDENTS ARE LIVING PAYCHECK-TO-PAYCHECK

An Appleseed-commissioned poll highlights the extent to which working families are now struggling to get by in Hawai'i.

HONOLULU, Hawai'i — A telephone survey conducted in February 2016 by QMark Research and commissioned by the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice found that 48 percent of Hawai'i residents would describe their financial situation as “surviving paycheck-to-paycheck.”

The survey, which polled 503 Hawai'i residents, revealed the extent of the financial struggles that many working families currently face across the state.

The vast majority of those polled flagged high housing costs and low wages as major concerns, and support tax credits that let working families keep more of what they earn. The poll results also show that Hawai'i residents are highly concerned about the state's high cost of housing and low wages and that they support tax credits to help them make ends meet.

- One in four (25 percent) have at some point worried about how they would pay that month's rent or mortgage.
- One in five (21 percent) have worried about how they would come up with enough money to pay their monthly utility bill.
- One in five (20 percent) have faced medical crisis bills that caused financial worry and hardship.
- One in six (17 percent) have worried about being able to provide basic necessities like food for loved ones.
- A full 95 percent identified the high cost of housing as a very serious or important problem in Hawai'i.
- Almost nine in ten (89 percent) believe the low wages paid to many residents are a very serious or important concern.
- Six out of seven (86 percent) indicate support for a tax credit that lets low and moderate income working families keep more of what they earn.

“Even as Hawai'i recovers from the Great Recession, thousands of our neighbors are still struggling day to day to support themselves and their families,” said Hawai'i Appleseed Co-Executive Director Gavin Thornton. “Our state is the second-worst in the nation when it comes to taxing low-income residents. However, targeted tax credits such as an improved low-income household renters tax credit can help better balance the tax burden among us.”

###

Hawai'i Appleseed is working to build a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, coalition building and advocacy.