

# ANTI-HUNGER POLICY PRIORITIES

## Massachusetts Advocates Call on State Legislators to Promote Access to Healthy Food

### **Breakfast After the Bell** | S.267/H.591 | Sen. DiDomenico & Rep. Vega

This bill alleviates child hunger by requiring schools with 60% or more of the student population eligible for free or reduced-price meals to serve Breakfast After the Bell. This legislation would increase breakfast access for over 150,000 kids in the Commonwealth.

**Status:** Referred to Joint Committee on Education | **Ask:** Report favorably

### **Charitable Donation of Not Readily Marketable Food** | H.1899 | Rep. Gifford

This legislation amends the general laws to give corporations, partnerships, organizations, associations, and governmental entities the same protections as individuals against civil damages for any injury arising out of the condition of food donated by them to nonprofits.

**Status:** Referred to Joint Committee on Public Health | **Ask:** Report favorably

### **Close the SNAP Gap** | S.678/H.1173 | Sen. DiDomenico & Rep. Livingstone

The “SNAP Gap” refers to the 740K+ people who are enrolled in MassHealth and likely eligible for SNAP (food assistance), but who aren’t receiving benefits. This bill will allow low-income households to apply for benefits through a common application, helping more residents meet their basic needs while increasing efficiency of state government.

**Status:** Referred to Senate & House Committees on Ways & Means | **Ask:** Report favorably

### **Community College Hunger Pilot** | S.757/H.1233 | Sen. Lovely & Rep. Meschino

This legislation establishes the Massachusetts Community College Campus Hunger Program, a fund to address food insecurity on community college campuses using a campus-designed method such as meal plans or meal cards.

**Status:** Referred to Joint Committee on Higher Education | **Ask:** Report favorably

### **Encourage Food Donations** | S.869/H.1475 | Sen. Comerford & Rep. Kane

This legislation eliminates unnecessary barriers dissuading food donation and expands liability protections to cover restaurants, individuals, nonprofits, and organizations seeking to donate food directly to persons in need. This legislation provides a tax deduction of up to \$2,000 to farmers who donate excess crops to nonprofit organizations.

**Status:** Referred to Joint Committee on the Judiciary | **Ask:** Report favorably

### **Expand Access to School Meals** | S.257/H.584 | Sen. Creem & Rep. Vargas

This bill expands access to free and reduced-price school meals to students who: are in the care of a non-parent relative, are disabled and receive SSI benefits, or have special needs, were formerly in foster care, and whose caregivers receive government assistance.

**Status:** Referred to Joint Committee on Education | **Ask:** Report favorably

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to Promote Access to Healthy Food

## **Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)** | S48/H145 | Sen. Gobi & Rep. Mark

The Healthy Incentives Program doubles SNAP recipients' purchasing power of fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers, improving health outcomes for vulnerable communities and increasing sales for local farms. This bill establishes the framework for the program's long-term sustainability.

**Status:** Referred to Joint Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities

**Ask:** Report favorably

## **Massachusetts Food Trust Program**

The Food Trust Program, launched in 2018, provides loans, grants, and technical assistance to support new and expanded food retailers in low- and moderate-income communities to increase healthy food access and spur economic growth. These funds—which leverage private and federal dollars—support program operations, outreach, and technical assistance.

**Status:** Implementation Year 1 | **Ask:** Continue operating funds & release more bond funding

## **Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program** | Line-Item 2511-0105

The Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP) provides critical funding that enables the Commonwealth's food banks to supply the basics of a healthy diet to families in need. In 2018, MEFAP funds provided 22 million healthy meals to our neighbors in need.

**Status:** Funded at \$20M in FY20 | **Ask:** Maintain funding

## **Promote Student Nutrition Act** | H585/S256 | Rep. Vargas/Sen. Creem

This bill addresses the practice of “meal shaming” students by requiring districts to take steps to reduce a family's meal debt via maximizing federal reimbursements. The legislation requires that districts communicate directly with adults about student meal debt and prohibits school officials from taking punitive action such as serving inferior meals or barring report cards for students with meal debt.

**Status:** Joint Committee on Education | **Ask:** Report favorably

## **Standardize Food Date Labeling** | H811/S492 | Rep. Kane/Sen. Kennedy

This legislation standardizes the date labeling of food to mitigate consumer confusion and thereby reduce food waste, which is the single largest contributor to solid waste.

**Status:** Joint Committee on Education | **Ask:** Report favorably

