

HOUSE No. 1368

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Andres X. Vargas and Mindy Domb

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing the Massachusetts hunger-free campus initiative.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Andres X. Vargas</i>	<i>3rd Essex</i>	<i>2/17/2021</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>2/18/2021</i>
<i>Paul W. Mark</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Harriette L. Chandler</i>	<i>First Worcester</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Christina A. Minicucci</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Michelle L. Ciccolo</i>	<i>15th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Sally P. Kerans</i>	<i>13th Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>3/2/2021</i>
<i>Patricia A. Duffy</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	<i>3/7/2021</i>
<i>Bradford Hill</i>	<i>4th Essex</i>	<i>3/1/2021</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Paul F. Tucker</i>	<i>7th Essex</i>	<i>2/28/2021</i>

<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>3/8/2021</i>
<i>Michael P. Kushmerek</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>
<i>Tommy Vitolo</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>	<i>3/14/2021</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/15/2021</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/24/2021</i>
<i>Jonathan D. Zlotnik</i>	<i>2nd Worcester</i>	<i>3/26/2021</i>
<i>Erika Uytterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/26/2021</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>3/30/2021</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Bristol</i>	<i>4/5/2021</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>4/6/2021</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>	<i>4/7/2021</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>	<i>4/9/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 1368

By Representatives Vargas of Haverhill and Domb of Amherst, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1368) of Andres X. Vargas, Mindy Domb and others for legislation to establish the hunger-free campus initiative to address college student food insecurity and hunger on public higher education campuses. Higher Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act establishing the Massachusetts hunger-free campus initiative.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following after
2 Section 44:

3 Section 45: Hunger-Free Campus Program

4 A. HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS INITIATIVE: CAPACITY BUILDING SERVICES

5 1. The Department of Higher Education (DHE) shall establish an initiative known as the
6 Hunger-Free Campus Initiative to address college student food insecurity and hunger across all
7 public higher education campuses. This initiative may also be available to certain not-for-profit
8 campuses that disproportionately serve low-income students as determined by the Hunger Free
9 Campus Program office. DHE shall establish an office of capacity building services (to be
10 known hereafter as “the office”), whose mission is to support institutions of public higher
11 education, to build their capacity to understand and address existing gaps in addressing student

12 food insecurity and hunger on their campus, using interventions that reflect best practices. The
13 office shall assist public higher education campuses to be designated as a “Hunger-Free
14 Campus” as delineated below and to meet the eligibility for Hunger-Free Campus grants. In
15 addition, the office administers the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program.

16 2. The office will develop and deliver technical assistance to assist the 29 public higher
17 education campuses to engage in activities and implement interventions that reflect best practices
18 that a) raise awareness on resources available to address basic food needs, b) leverage existing
19 infrastructure and maximize current federal programs, and c) build strategic partnerships at the
20 federal, state, and local levels to mitigate food insecurity among students. Technical assistance
21 will support the knowledge, skills, and comfort the campuses need in order to deliver services as
22 part of this program. Technical assistance may include (1) resource and materials development,
23 (2) consultation, (3) training, (4) network development and support, and (5) the statewide
24 Hunger-Free Campus grant program to support campus efforts to implement measurable,
25 sustainable, and equitable interventions to address the basic food needs of college students in the
26 Commonwealth.

27 3. The office will also administer and advise the Commissioner of the Department of
28 Higher Education on the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program. The Hunger-Free Campus grants
29 will be awarded to sustain efforts by institutions to implement measurable, sustainable, and
30 equitable solutions to address the basic food needs of college students in the Commonwealth.

31 4. The office of capacity building services shall submit a report on common themes and
32 best practices for increasing food security resources available to students to the Commissioner of

33 the Department of Higher Education as well as the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Joint
34 Committee on Higher Education no later than two years after the passage of this act.

35 B. DESIGNATION AS A HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS

36 The Hunger-Free Campus Initiative will partner with public higher education campuses
37 and certain not-for-profit campuses that disproportionately serve low-income students to support
38 implementation of interventions that meet the aforementioned goals including the following five
39 anti-hunger activities. Completion of the following five initiatives in each academic year will
40 earn the campus the designation of a Hunger-Free Campus.

41 Such designation will qualify institutions to apply for Hunger-Free Campus grants to
42 support their work in addition to demonstrating public recognition of their efforts. Initial
43 designation is for two years, with annual renewal thereafter.

44 Campus anti-hunger activities can utilize the initiative's capacity building services and
45 could include:

46 (1) Institutions will designate one staff person to be the Hunger-Free Campus
47 Coordinator. The Coordinator will be the contact person with the Hunger-Free Campus Program
48 Office and oversee the institution's activities.

49 (2) Institutions shall establish a Hunger-Free Campus Task Force. The Task Force
50 determines the priority activities for the campus for the academic year and can also engage in
51 multi-year campus planning. The Task Force includes, but is not limited to, two or more students
52 with lived experience of food insecurity, a faculty member, a member of the health services staff,
53 a member of the student services staff, a member of the campus dining or food services staff, and

54 a representative from a local hunger-relief organization. The Task Force shall meet a minimum
55 of three times per academic year in order to establish goals, action plans, and engage in program
56 planning.

57 (3) Institutions will determine mechanisms to notify students who receive need-based
58 financial aid of their potential eligibility to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
59 (SNAP) benefits, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
60 (WIC) benefits, and other federal and state nutrition benefits available to said student or
61 dependents. Mechanisms can include submitting such notification in all financial aid award
62 letters and through financial aid portals available to students. Institutions will make such
63 notification.

64 (4) Institutions will conduct an annual hunger awareness activity in concert with
65 other statewide and national anti-hunger events.

66 (5) Institutions will assess the need to provide access to on-campus food distribution,
67 or to a local off-campus food pantry, or to an on-campus food pantry.

68 C. HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS (HFC) GRANTS – ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

69 Subject to available resources at the institution, the Department of Higher Education shall
70 consider awarding Hunger-Free Campus grants to institution's that have been designated Hunger-
71 Free Campuses and can demonstrate progress or commitment to implementing one or more of
72 the following anti-hunger initiatives:

73 1. The development of a student meal credit sharing program in which students can
74 utilize either unused or donated meal swipes from other students in prepaid meal programs.

75 2. The establishment of a campus basic needs emergency fund to support students in
76 crisis with emergency expenses associated with but not limited to food, shelter, utilities, and
77 childcare. Such fund will include policies of administration, ways to access, and an identified
78 administration contact.

79 3. The designation of one or more staff persons whose responsibility is to assist food
80 insecure students access nutrition and other basic needs resources, subject to appropriation.

81 4. The dissemination of an anonymous brief campus-wide annual survey in which
82 students are asked about their experience with food insecurity; their access to anti-hunger
83 campus resources; awareness and access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
84 and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits.
85 Such questions could be included in other campus-wide surveys.

86 5. The commitment of on-campus meal vendors to become Electronic Benefits Transfer
87 (EBT) vendors under the Restaurant Meal Program (RMP) under the Supplemental Nutrition
88 Assistance Program (SNAP) in order to allow students who are homeless and students with
89 disabilities to use their SNAP benefits to access hot meals.

90 6. The establishment of an on-campus food pantry.

91 The Department of Higher Education will establish a grant making process for public
92 higher education campuses and certain not-for-profit campuses that disproportionately serve low-
93 income students, including an application that clarifies eligibility. Following implementation of
94 the award, recipients will be expected to provide basic information to the Department of Higher
95 Education on how the award was used, its deliverables and outcomes.

96 D. HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

97 1. Grantmaking – Upon recommendation by the Hunger Free Campus Program staff, the
98 Commissioner of Higher Education shall allocate funding to institutions designated as Hunger-
99 Free Campuses as provided under subsection [B]. The Commissioner of Higher Education, or a
100 designee, shall determine the amount of each grant which shall be used by the institution to
101 address food insecurity among its students in accordance with this initiative. The Department
102 will also establish reporting guidelines for recipients that will support the Department’s need for
103 information as identified below.

104 These grants are available only to public higher education campuses and certain not-for-
105 profit campuses that disproportionately serve low-income students as determined by the Hunger
106 Free Campus Program office.

107 E. HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS PROGRAM AND GRANT FUND

108 The Hunger-Free Campus Program and Grant Fund is established as a special fund in the
109 Department of Higher Education. The following shall apply to the operation of the fund:

110 (1) Money in the fund shall be appropriated annually to the Department of Higher
111 Education for the purpose of awarding grants under this section.

112 (2) The sum of \$1,000,000 shall be transferred from the General Fund to the Hunger-Free
113 Campus Program and Grant Fund to be used exclusively for the Hunger-Free Campus Program.

114 F. REPORTING

115 1. The Department of Higher Education shall submit an annual report by July 1 on the
116 Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program for the preceding fiscal year to the Governor and the Joint
117 Committee on Higher Education Chairs. The report will be known as the “annual report”.

118 2. The annual report shall include a review of activities resulting from the Hunger-Free
119 Campus program, including: a) identifying the institutions participating in the Hunger-Free
120 Campus program; 2) describing the activities that have occurred on participating campuses in
121 response to hunger and food insecurity in students; 3) the level of student engagement in
122 activities; and 4) the outcomes resulting from activities.

123 3. The annual report shall also provide information on hunger-free campus grantmaking,
124 including: a) the number and amounts of the grant awards, b) the recipients of such awards; c)
125 the activities supported by awards; d) the impact of the Hunger-Free Campus Initiative and its
126 grants on the participation of institutions in the Hunger-Free Campus designation and in reducing
127 the number of students experiencing food insecurity; and e) recommendations on the future and
128 potential expansion of the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program.