

SENATE No. 127

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Walter F. Timilty

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 relative to establishing an emergency food assistance committee.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Walter F. Timilty

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Norfolk, Plymouth and Bristol

SENATE No. 127

By Mr. Timilty, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 127) of Walter F. Timilty for legislation to establish an emergency food assistance committee. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 146 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act relative to establishing an emergency food assistance committee.

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 20 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 32 the
2 following section:-

3 Section 33. (a) There shall be an emergency food assistance committee in the department
4 of agricultural resources, which shall be a state and a private, non-profit food distribution
5 partnership between the department of agricultural resources, food banks and pantries, to
6 evaluate hunger and food accessibility in the Commonwealth.

7 The committee shall consist of the commissioner of agricultural resources or a designee,
8 who shall be the chair; the secretary of environmental affairs or a designee; the secretary of
9 housing and economic development or a designee; the commissioner of public health or a

10 designee; the commissioner of transitional assistance or a designee; the commissioner of
11 elementary and secondary education or a designee; a representative of the Greater Boston Food
12 Bank; a representative of the Merrimack Valley Food Bank; a representative of the Food Bank of
13 Western Massachusetts; a representative of the Worcester County Food Bank; a representative of
14 Project Bread; a representative of the Coalition to End Hunger; a representative from 5 food
15 pantries in each county of the Commonwealth; and 4 members whom shall be appointed by the
16 governor, 1 of whom shall be an expert in food access in the Commonwealth, 1 of whom shall be
17 an expert in childhood hunger, 1 of whom shall represent a local health department addressing
18 food safety and nutrition, and 1 of whom shall represent community-based efforts addressing
19 nutrition and public health.

20 (b) The committee shall annually evaluate and generate a report on distribution of food
21 by food banks and pantries, and food accessibility and hunger in the Commonwealth. The
22 committee report shall include:

23 (i) the demand for food at food banks and pantries, including the number of individuals
24 served monthly;

25 (ii) the populations being served by food banks and pantries, and areas for improvement
26 to ensure equal access to food across the Commonwealth;

27 (iii) the types of foods being donated and distributed by food banks and pantries, and
28 areas for improvement to ensure access to nutritious and healthy foods to meet public health
29 recommendations;

30 (iv) methods for food distribution by food banks and pantries, and areas for improvement
31 to promote public health and safety;

32 (v) methods to promote acquisition and distribution of locally produced foods at food
33 banks and pantries;

34 (vi) accessibility issues relating to existing food banks and pantries;

35 (vii) financial assistance needed from state and federal governments; and

36 (viii) trends in hunger and food accessibility.

37 (c) Each member of the committee appointed by the governor shall be appointed for a
38 term of 4 years and shall serve until the member's successor is appointed and qualified. A person
39 appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term of the member
40 creating the vacancy. Members shall be eligible for reappointment.

41 (d) The committee shall maintain a public website under the department of agricultural
42 resources.

43 (e) The committee report shall be posted on said public website to provide resources to
44 accessing food banks, food pantries and hunger advocacy organizations in the Commonwealth,
45 and to promote transparency of public funding of food banks and pantries.