

HOUSE No. 4697

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, April 19, 2022.

The committee on Higher Education to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1350) of Joan Meschino and others relative to establishing a community college campus hunger pilot program to address food insecurity on community college campuses and the 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, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4697) ought to pass.

For the committee,

DAVID M. ROGERS.

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**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 SECTION 1. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the
2 following after Section 45:

3 Section 46: Hunger-Free Campus Program

4 (a). There shall be a grant program to be managed by the department to be known as the
5 Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, herein the program, for the purpose of
6 providing grants to the state’s public higher education institutions to address student food
7 insecurity and hunger.

8 Using funding allocated under the grant program, the department is authorized to hire a
9 director of the program who shall report to the commissioner. The director, in consultation with
10 the commissioner shall develop guidelines and procedures governing the grant making process
11 and the program. In developing the program, the department shall use existing data pertaining to
12 student hunger and, in its discretion may conduct any additional surveys the department deems
13 necessary to understand existing gaps in addressing student food insecurity and hunger on public

14 higher education campuses across the commonwealth. The department may use funding
15 allocated under the grant program for any additional surveys it undertakes.

16 The guidelines and procedures that govern the program shall specify any requirements
17 applicable to public higher education institutions in order to apply and qualify for grants under
18 the program, including without limitation (i) whether the institution has designated campus staff
19 to interface with the department; (ii) the existence and extent of any campus-level hunger
20 awareness programs, including notification to eligible students of their rights to participate in
21 government-sponsored food assistance programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
22 Program (SNAP) benefits, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and
23 Children (WIC) benefits, and other federal and state nutrition benefits available to said student or
24 dependents; (iii) whether the institution has established any requirements for on-campus meal
25 vendors to accept Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) under the Supplemental Nutrition
26 Assistance Program (SNAP); (iv) the existence of, or the development of, a student meal credit
27 sharing program in which students can utilize either unused or donated meal credits from other
28 students; (v) income-based standards by which grant levels are determined according to the
29 student population at each participating campus; and (vi) any other pertinent criteria as
30 developed by the department. These grants are available only to public higher education
31 campuses as determined by the department in accordance with this chapter.

32 Using funding allocated under the program, the department shall develop and deliver
33 technical assistance to assist the public institutions of higher education to meet the requirements
34 set forth in the guidelines and procedures developed above. Technical assistance may include
35 without limitation (A) resource and materials development, (B) consultation, (C) training, and

36 (D) guidance on maximizing the commonwealth's participation in existing programs at the
37 federal, state, and local levels to mitigate food insecurity among students.

38 (b) Subject to appropriation, the department shall award grants to institutions that have
39 met the guidelines and procedures established by the department. Upon recommendation by the
40 director of the program, the commissioner, or a designee, shall determine the amount of each
41 grant which shall be used by the institution to address food insecurity among its students in
42 accordance with the program.

43 The department shall also establish reporting guidelines for public higher education
44 institution that are the recipients of grants that include, without limitation, a detailed description
45 pertaining to the uses of such grants and the outcomes and results from such grants.

46 (c) The department shall submit an annual report by July 1 on the Hunger-Free Campus
47 Grant Program for the preceding fiscal year to the governor and the chairs of the Joint
48 Committee on Higher Education.

49 The report shall include a comprehensive assessment of the program for the applicable
50 year, including without limitation: (i) identifying the institutions participating in the program; (ii)
51 describing the activities that have occurred on participating campuses in response to hunger and
52 food insecurity in students; (iii) the level of student engagement in activities; and (iv) the
53 outcomes resulting from activities.

54 The report shall also provide information on hunger-free campus grantmaking, including:
55 (A) the number and amounts of the grant awards, (B) the recipients of such awards; (C) the
56 activities supported by awards; (D) the impact of the program in reducing the number of
57 students experiencing food insecurity; and (E) recommendations on any changes to the program.

58 SECTION 2. Chapter 29 of the General Law is hereby amended by inserting after section
59 200000 the following new section:-

60 Section 2PPPPP. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the
61 commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Grant
62 Trust Fund, herein the fund. The fund shall be administered by the commissioner of the
63 department of higher education. The fund shall be credited with: (i) revenue from appropriations
64 or other money authorized by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the
65 fund; (ii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iii) funds from public and private sources such
66 as gifts, grants and donations. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be subject to further
67 appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to
68 the General Fund.

69 (b) Amounts credited to the fund shall be used to fund grants made pursuant to the
70 program, and for the cost of administration of such program by the department of higher
71 education.

72 (c) Amounts received from private sources shall be approved by the commissioner of
73 higher education and subject to review before being deposited in the fund to ensure that pledged
74 funds are not accompanied by conditions, explicit or implicit, on the implementation of the
75 Massachusetts Hunger-free College Grant Program that may be detrimental to the program. The
76 review shall be made publicly available.

77 (d) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner shall report to the clerks of the
78 house of representatives and senate, the joint committee on higher education, and the house and
79 senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activity. The report shall include, but not be

80 limited to: (i) the source and amount of funds received; (ii) the amounts distributed and the
81 purpose of expenditures from the fund; (iii) any grants provided to institutions of higher
82 education and other stakeholder organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure
83 projections for the next year.