

SENATE No. 146

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:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth</i>	
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>3/30/2021</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>4/26/2021</i>

SENATE No. 146

By Mr. Timilty, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 146) of Walter F. Timilty and Susannah M. Whipps for legislation to establish an emergency food assistance committee. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

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

Western Massachusetts; a representative of the Worcester County Food Bank; a representative of Project Bread; a representative of the Coalition to End Hunger; a representative from 5 food pantries in each county of the Commonwealth; and 4 members whom shall be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be an expert in food access in the Commonwealth, 1 of whom shall be an expert in childhood hunger, 1 of whom shall represent a local health department addressing food safety and nutrition, and 1 of whom shall represent community-based efforts addressing nutrition and public health.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (vi) accessibility issues relating to existing food banks and pantries;
- (vii) financial assistance needed from state and federal governments; and
- (viii) trends in hunger and food accessibility.

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

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

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