HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 2378 FILED ON: 1/16/2025

HOUSE . . . . . No. 118

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Mindy Domb and Andres X. Vargas

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 resolve:

Resolve providing for an investigation by a special commission relative to the strengths and sustainability of the Commonwealth's emergency food network.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Mindy Domb	*3rd Hampshire*	*1/16/2025*
Andres X. Vargas	*3rd Essex*	*1/16/2025*
James C. Arena-DeRosa	*8th Middlesex*	*3/25/2025*
Natalie M. Blais	*1st Franklin*	*3/25/2025*
Joanne M. Comerford	*Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester*	*3/25/2025*
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*	*6/17/2025*
Tara T. Hong	*18th Middlesex*	*3/25/2025*
Margaret R. Scarsdale	*1st Middlesex*	*5/12/2025*
Natalie M. Higgins	*4th Worcester*	*8/7/2025*

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By Representatives Domb of Amherst and Vargas of Haverhill, a petition (accompanied by resolve, House, No. 118) of Mindy Domb and Andres X. Vargas for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to the sustainability of eligible emergency food providers, known as food pantries. Agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

Resolve providing for an investigation by a special commission relative to the strengths and sustainability of the Commonwealth's emergency food network.

Resolved, that a special commission is hereby established to study the sustainability of eligible emergency food providers, known as food pantries, in the Massachusetts Emergency Food Network Assistance Program (MEFAP). The commission shall study the strengths of food pantry programs and the challenges they face regarding the adequacy of state support, workforce development, organizational sustainability, governance, succession planning, and capacity to meet resident needs. The commission shall compare state practices of providing emergency food assistance with state practices of providing emergency housing assistance.

Resolved, that the commission shall make recommendations to address the capacity of the emergency food network, specifically the network of food pantries, regarding: (i) workforce development, training, apprenticeship opportunities, (ii) policies and technical assistance to support organizational sustainability, governance and succession planning, (iii) assessment of emergency food needed to meet the commonwealth's demand, (iv) implications of increased

need on projected purchasing and impact on state funding and private fundraising, and (v) the frequency of food pantry use by Massachusetts residents.

Resolved, the special commission shall consist of: 3 people who shall be representatives of food pantries from different geographic areas representing urban, suburban and rural communities, 3 of whom shall be representatives of food banks representing communities not represented by pantry program members, 2 of whom shall be food pantry program participants, 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of the Massachusetts department of agricultural resources or a designee, 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of transitional assistance or a designee, 1 of whom shall be a member of the Massachusetts food system caucus to be appointed by the chairs of the caucus, 1 of whom shall be a member of the Massachusetts food systems collaborative, 1 of whom shall be a member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker, and 1 of whom shall be a member of the senate appointed by the senate president.

Said commission shall ensure that its meetings shall be open to the public, notes will be taken and made available. The appointment of the commissioners shall occur within 30 days after the effective date of this resolve. The commission shall convene its first meeting no later than 45 days after the bill's enactment. The commission shall meet as often as needed to complete its report.

Within 18 months of enactment, said commission shall report to the clerks of the house of representatives and senate, the chairs of the joint committee on agriculture, the chairs of the joint committee on children, families, and persons with disabilities; and the chairs of the joint committee on elder affairs on the results of its investigation and its recommendations, including proposals of legislation or regulations necessary to carry its recommendations into effect.

The special commission shall dissolve 30 days after the submission of the report, unless upon a two-thirds vote of the Commission, a continuance is deemed necessary to complete the purpose of the Commission. The time frame of said continuance must be specified in the motion to extend time of operation.