

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 4419

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, September 8, 2025.

The committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, to whom was referred the 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, reports recommending that the accompanying resolve (House, No. 4419) ought to pass.

For the committee,

NATALIE M. BLAIS.

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4419**

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**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.

1           **Resolved**, that a special commission is hereby established to study the sustainability of  
2 eligible emergency food providers, known as food pantries, in the Massachusetts Emergency  
3 Food Assistance Program (MEFAP). The commission shall study the strengths of food pantry  
4 programs and the challenges they face regarding the adequacy of state support, workforce  
5 development, organizational sustainability, governance, succession planning, and capacity to  
6 meet resident needs.

7           Resolved, that the commission shall make recommendations to address the capacity of  
8 the emergency food network, specifically the network of food pantries, regarding: (i) workforce  
9 development, training, apprenticeship opportunities, (ii) policies and technical assistance to  
10 support organizational sustainability, governance and succession planning, (iii) assessment of  
11 emergency food needed to meet the commonwealth’s demand, (iv) implications of increased  
12 need on projected purchasing and impact on state funding and private fundraising, and (v) the  
13 frequency of food pantry use by Massachusetts residents.

14 Resolved, the commission shall consist of: the commissioner of the Massachusetts  
15 department of agricultural resources or a designee, who shall serve as chair; the commissioner of  
16 the department of transitional assistance or a designee; a member of the Massachusetts food  
17 system caucus to be appointed by the chairs of the caucus; a member who shall be appointed by  
18 the speaker; a member who shall be appointed by the senate president; a representative of the  
19 merrimack valley food bank; a representative of the greater boston food bank; a representative  
20 from the worcester county food bank; a representative of the food bank of western  
21 Massachusetts; 4 representatives from food pantries appointed by the food bank coalition of  
22 Massachusetts, 1 of whom shall represent a food pantry operating in an urban area, 1 of whom  
23 shall represent a food pantry operating in a suburban area, 1 of whom shall represent a food  
24 pantry operating in a rural area, and 1 of whom shall represent a food pantry operating in a non-  
25 urban area; and 2 representatives who shall be participants in food pantry programs from diverse  
26 cultural, racial, social, geographic or ethnic backgrounds appointed by the Massachusetts food  
27 system collaborative.

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

33 Within 18 months of enactment, the commission shall file a report of its findings and  
34 recommendations, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations  
35 into effect by filing the same to the clerks of the house of representatives and senate, the chairs  
36 of the joint committee on agriculture and fisheries, the chairs of the joint committee on children,

37 families, and persons with disabilities; and the chairs of the joint committee on aging and  
38 independence on the results of its investigation and its recommendations, including proposals of  
39 legislation or regulations necessary to carry its recommendations into effect.

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