

HOUSE No. 735

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Andres X. Vargas and Mindy Domb

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 to promote food literacy.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Andres X. Vargas</i>	<i>3rd Essex</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>1/24/2025</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>1/24/2025</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/27/2025</i>
<i>Natalie M. Blais</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>	<i>1/27/2025</i>
<i>Danillo A. Sena</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/27/2025</i>
<i>Erika Uyterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2025</i>
<i>Hannah Kane</i>	<i>11th Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2025</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/6/2025</i>
<i>Jacob R. Oliveira</i>	<i>Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester</i>	<i>2/7/2025</i>
<i>James C. Arena-DeRosa</i>	<i>8th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/20/2025</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>2/24/2025</i>
<i>Kevin G. Honan</i>	<i>17th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/26/2025</i>
<i>Bruce E. Tarr</i>	<i>First Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/3/2025</i>
<i>Jonathan D. Zlotnik</i>	<i>2nd Worcester</i>	<i>3/18/2025</i>
<i>Tara T. Hong</i>	<i>18th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/18/2025</i>

<i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>	<i>3/18/2025</i>
<i>John Barrett, III</i>	<i>1st Berkshire</i>	<i>3/18/2025</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>	<i>3/31/2025</i>
<i>John Francis Moran</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/31/2025</i>
<i>Carmin Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/9/2025</i>
<i>Margaret R. Scarsdale</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>7/15/2025</i>
<i>Kristin E. Kassner</i>	<i>2nd Essex</i>	<i>10/22/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 735

By Representatives Vargas of Haverhill and Domb of Amherst, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 735) of Andres X. Vargas, Mindy Domb and others that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education be authorized to promote and facilitate food literacy programs in school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, or collaborative schools. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 601 OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to promote food literacy.

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 10 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting after section 35SSS the following section:

3 Section 35TTT. There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth
4 a separate fund to be known as the Food Literacy Trust Fund. The fund may receive money
5 from: any appropriations authorized by the general court specifically designated to be credited to
6 the fund; gifts, grants and donations from public or private sources; federal reimbursements and
7 grants-in-aid; and any interest earned from the fund. Monies may be expended by the department
8 of elementary and secondary education to encourage and facilitate food literacy programs in

9 school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, or collaborative
10 schools.

11 No expenditure from the fund shall cause the fund to be in deficiency at the close of the
12 fiscal year. The fund shall be an expendable trust fund and shall not be subject to appropriation
13 or allotment. The state treasurer shall be the custodian of the fund and shall receive, deposit and
14 invest all money transmitted under this section to ensure the highest interest rate available
15 consistent with the safety of the fund. The books and records of the fund shall be subject to an
16 annual audit by the state auditor. The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall
17 report annually to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee
18 on education on income received into the fund and sources of that income, any expenditure from
19 the fund and the purpose of that expenditure and the fund's balance. Money in the fund at the
20 end of the fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund and shall be available for expenditure
21 in the subsequent year and shall not be subject to section 5C of chapter 29.

22 SECTION 2. The third paragraph section 1D of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as so
23 appearing, is hereby by amended, the words "consumer skills," in line 38, by adding the
24 following words:-

25 "food literacy,"

26 SECTION 3. Chapter 69 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
27 inserting after section 1T the following section:

28 Section 1U. (a) Food literacy standards established pursuant to section 1D shall promote
29 an understanding of food systems including, but not limited to: (i) nutrition and the impact of
30 diet on personal health; (ii) culinary skills and menu planning; (iii) food production, including

31 farming, fishing, and processing; (iv) the connections between the food system and the
32 environment; (v) hunger, its causes and efforts to alleviate it; (vi) racial and other inequities in
33 access to food and jobs in the food system; (vii) food justice; (viii) cultural connections to food;
34 and (ix) local food producers; and (x) careers in the food system including in the fields of
35 farming, fishing, processing, engineering, transportation, public health, and hunger alleviation.

36 (b) A school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school or
37 collaborative school may incorporate the food literacy standards established pursuant to section
38 1D and subsection (a) into existing curriculum including, but not limited to, mathematics,
39 science, or history and social sciences.

40 (c) The department shall make resources, including high quality lessons and curricula,
41 available to school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools and
42 collaborative schools to assist in the selection of materials and curriculum on food literacy. The
43 department shall identify and offer information on resources for professional development
44 activities and instruction on food literacy. The department may consult with private or non-profit
45 experts in the fields of nutrition, agriculture, food systems, food security, or other related fields.

46 (d) The department may expend funds from the Food Literacy Trust Fund established
47 pursuant to section 35TTT of chapter 10, to implement this section.

48 (e) There shall annually be a review by the department relative to the implementation of
49 food literacy standards, including a study of food literacy programs offered in the commonwealth
50 to students in kindergarten through grade 12. The commissioner shall consult with the office of
51 the state treasurer to, subject to appropriation, convene a working group consisting of educators
52 experienced in teaching curriculum related to food literacy and any individuals or organizations

53 the department deems relevant with expertise in food systems, including, but not limited to,
54 nutrition, farming, fishing, culinary arts, food justice and food career opportunities. The review
55 shall include a report on best practices and recommended improvements to food literacy
56 standards. The report shall be submitted to the clerks of the house of representatives and the
57 senate and the joint committee on education.