SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1567 FILED ON: 1/16/2025

SENATE . . . . . No. 939

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Joan B. Lovely

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 establishing the hunger-free campus initiative.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
Joan B. Lovely	*Second Essex*	
Joanne M. Comerford	*Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester*	*1/23/2025*
Michael D. Brady	*Second Plymouth and Norfolk*	*2/6/2025*
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*	*2/8/2025*
Manny Cruz	*7th Essex*	*2/12/2025*
Paul W. Mark	*Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire*	*2/23/2025*
Nick Collins	*First Suffolk*	*3/4/2025*
Adam Gómez	*Hampden*	*3/5/2025*
Sal N. DiDomenico	*Middlesex and Suffolk*	*3/5/2025*
Mark C. Montigny	*Second Bristol and Plymouth*	*3/6/2025*
James C. Arena-DeRosa	*8th Middlesex*	*3/7/2025*
Robyn K. Kennedy	*First Worcester*	*3/10/2025*
Patrick M. O'Connor	*First Plymouth and Norfolk*	*3/21/2025*
Michael O. Moore	*Second Worcester*	*3/21/2025*
John F. Keenan	*Norfolk and Plymouth*	*4/2/2025*
Bruce E. Tarr	*First Essex and Middlesex*	*4/2/2025*
Vanna Howard	*17th Middlesex*	*4/4/2025*

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By Ms. Lovely, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 939) of Joan B. Lovely, Joanne M. Comerford, Michael D. Brady, James B. Eldridge and other members of the General Court for legislation to establish the hunger-free campus initiative that would provide grants to institutions of public higher education to address student food insecurity and hunger. Higher Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *4453* OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing the 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:

Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

Section 46. (a) Subject to appropriation, there shall be a hunger-free campus grant program managed by the department to provide grants to institutions of public higher education to address student food insecurity and hunger in order to support students in completion of their career and technical education at the post-secondary level with the goal of enhancing the workforce of the commonwealth. This grant program shall also be available to municipally administered colleges and to minority-serving institutions as defined under 20 U.S.C. 1067k (3) as determined by the United States Department of Education. Funding for the grant program may

include, but not be limited to, appropriations from the Education and Transportation Fund established in section 2BBBBBB of chapter 29.

Using funding allocated under the grant program, the department is authorized to hire a director of the program who shall report to the commissioner. The director shall develop guidelines and procedures governing the grant making process and the program using available data pertaining to student hunger. The director may also conduct any additional surveys the department deems necessary to understand gaps in addressing student food insecurity and hunger eligible higher education campuses across the commonwealth.

The guidelines and procedures that govern the program shall specify any requirements applicable to eligible institutions of higher education including, but not limited to: (i) whether the institution has designated campus staff to interface with the department; (ii) the existence and extent of any campus-level hunger awareness programs, including notification to students of their rights to participate in federal and state food assistance programs; (iii) whether the institution has established on-campus meal vendors to accept available federal and state nutrition benefits; (iv) the existence or development of a student meal credit sharing program; (v) income based standards by which grant levels are determined according to the student population at each participating campus; and (vi) any other pertinent criteria as developed by the department. The department shall further develop and deliver technical assistance to assist eligible institutions of higher education to meet the goals of this program.

(b) Subject to appropriation, the department shall award grants to institutions that have met the guidelines and procedures established by the department. Upon recommendation by the director of the program, the

commissioner or a designee shall determine the amount of each grant which shall be used by the institution to address food insecurity among its students in accordance with the program and shall establish reporting guidelines for grant recipients.

(c) Annually, not later than July 1, the department shall submit a report on the hunger-free campus grant program for the preceding fiscal year to the governor, the clerks of the senate and house of representatives and the joint committee on higher education. The report shall include the number and amounts of grants to eligible institutions well as a comprehensive assessment of the program for the applicable year, including: (i) identifying the institutions participating in the program; (ii) describing the activities of participating campuses; (iii) the level of student engagement in activities; and (iv) the outcomes resulting from activities.

(d) There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Hunger-Free Campus Trust Fund administered by the commissioner of higher education. The fund shall be credited with: (i) revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iii) funds from public and private sources such as gifts, grants and donations. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund. Amounts credited to the fund shall be used to fund grants made pursuant to the program, and for the cost of administration of such program by the department of higher education.

(e) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner shall report to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the joint committee on higher education and the house and senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activity including: (i) the source and amount

of funds received; (ii) the amounts distributed and the purpose of expenditures from the fund; (iii) any grants provided to institutions of higher education and other stakeholder organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure projections for the next year.