

The Honorable Ronald Mariano
House Speaker
Room 356, State House
Boston MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz
Chair, House Ways and Means
Room 243, State House
Boston, MA 02133

DATE

Dear Speaker Mariano and Chairman Michlewitz:

Thank you for leadership to expand access to higher education and to provide hunger-relief to many residents of the Commonwealth last year. I am writing to urge you to include **\$2M in the FY25 budget for the Hunger-Free Campus Initiative, building upon \$3.7M in ARPA funding from the state and \$1M in the FY24 budget.**

The MA Hunger Free Campus Initiative creates a grant program within the Department of Higher Education and allows community colleges, public universities, and minority-serving institutions to apply for funding to advance sustainable, impactful, hunger relief initiatives on campus. These funds have benefited thousands of low-income students, from enrolling eligible students in SNAP benefits at Cape Cod Community College and pulling federal funds into the Commonwealth, to increasing access to meals for homeless students during breaks at Salem State University. We are encouraged that the Joint Committee on Higher Education reported the bill (*An Act establishing the Hunger Free Campus Initiative [H.1293/S.835]*) favorably, re-drafted to include a Director within DHE to manage the grant program. This increased funding in the budget would factor in this additional resource.

Why does hunger free campus initiative funding matter to you? Add a story or data specific to your campus or community.

I understand that current state revenues are not at the level expected, but now is not the time to pull back on funding, especially as enrollment at our state's public universities and community colleges rises. Thank you for your consideration of this request for **\$2M in the FY25 budget for the Hunger Free Campus Initiative.** Sustained, robust funding for food security programming through the Hunger Free Campus Initiative is necessary in the FY25 budget to maintain these impactful investments.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your organization