



The Hon. Jason Lewis  
Chair, Joint Committee on Education  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

The Hon. Denise Garlick  
Chair, Joint Committee on Education  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

The Hon. Sal DiDomenico  
Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Education  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

The Hon. Steven Ultrino  
Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Education  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

October 19, 2023:

Re: S.310/H.601 **An Act to promote food literacy**

Dear Chair Lewis, Chair Garlick, Vice Chair DiDomenico, and Vice Chair Ultrino:

The Greater Boston Food Bank is proud to support An Act to promote food literacy ([S.310](#); [H.601](#)). Expanding food literacy will help achieve the Greater Boston Food Bank's mission to End Hunger Here through giving students access to critical knowledge about nutrition and food systems important to preparing students for success.

As the largest hunger-relief organization in New England, The Greater Boston Food Bank, distributes over 85 million pounds of food each year across Eastern Massachusetts and advances in our communities through purchasing healthy food and our programming. GBFB gives our neighbors an opportunity to be part of ending hunger in Eastern Massachusetts through supporting our hunger-relief efforts and advocating for public policies that will tackle hunger and poverty. Developing food literacy will aid our efforts in engaging the Eastern Massachusetts community in combating hunger and giving our neighbors most affected by hunger tools to acquire nutritious food and advocate for sustainable food systems.

Food literacy education will empower students to become lifelong learners who understand the intersecting issues of food justice, health, agriculture, nutrition, and culinary skills and can nourish themselves and their communities with healthy food that allows them to thrive. These are critical foundational skills that foster contribution to and benefit from a resilient and equitable food system. GBFB is already working to improve access to education through our Click 'N Cook website, providing recipes for healthy and affordable meals using food distributed by GBFB, and through our SNAP team which assists households in accessing SNAP benefits. This bill would supercharge our efforts in combatting hunger and catalyze greater awareness of the work that GBFB and other organizations do each day to end hunger in our community. At a time when one in three of our neighbors, including one in three children, are facing food insecurity, there is no time more appropriate to mobilize students to understand how food is produced, why not everyone has access to food, and how we can end hunger in the Commonwealth.

The Legislature has already recognized the importance of food to education through passing permanent universal school meals in the Commonwealth. The crucial next step is to empower students to understand the food system inside and outside of the classroom, through a broad and comprehensive food literacy curriculum that allows for significant local adaptation to community needs. Food literate students will grow into our Commonwealth's next generation who can promote nutrition in their own households and communities and will become leaders in Massachusetts' food system.

We encourage you to pass An Act to promote food literacy ([S.310](#); [H.601](#)) to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and hunger in Massachusetts and to enhance equity by making information about nutrition, food systems, and cooking accessible to all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony D'Amico". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Catherine D'Amato

President and CEO

The Greater Boston Food Bank