

June 27, 2023

Senator Nick Collins  
Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight  
24 Beacon St., Room 312-E  
Boston, MA, 02133

Senator Joan Lovely  
Vice Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight  
24 Beacon St., Room 413-D  
Boston, MA, 02133

Representative Antonio Cabral  
Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight  
24 Beacon St., Room 446  
Boston, MA, 02133

Representative Chynah Tyler  
Vice Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight  
24 Beacon St., Room 33  
Boston, MA, 02133

**Re: H.3029/S.2073 - An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security**

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Lovely, Chair Cabral, Vice Chair Tyler, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight,

I am honored to have the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 3029 and Senate Bill 2073, "An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security," sponsored by Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante and Senator Bruce Tarr, on behalf of **The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB)**.

GBFB is the largest hunger relief organization in New England and among the largest food banks in the country. GBFB distributes more than 90 million healthy meals annually through a network of nearly 600 partner agencies in 190 cities and towns across Eastern Massachusetts. Monthly, we are serving approximately 600,000 individuals, including vulnerable populations of seniors, veterans, college students, children, and families.

Earlier this month, GBFB published the results of a study published in collaboration with Mass General Brigham Hospital, entitled, [Opportunities to Improve Food Equity and Access in Massachusetts](#), which found that an astounding 1 in 3 people faced hunger in 2022, a statistic consistent with hunger in the Commonwealth during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the release of this report, the research lead and I wrote an op-ed that was published in the Boston Globe [urging action on this very bill](#).

Food security must be elevated as a statewide policy priority through an executive office that would provide coordination of the many state agencies that advance food and nutrition programs and a renewed focus on ending hunger in the Commonwealth. Such an office, as proposed in **H.3029/S.2073**, would coordinate existing and new resources to address food insecurity in Massachusetts by aligning federal funding with state agency frameworks. Currently, the state Department of Transitional Assistance administers SNAP assistance, the Department of Public Health administers WIC, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education oversees school and summer meals, and the USDA administers food for the food bank system — with MassHealth piloting the Flex Services program.

Dedicated state oversight would streamline efforts to make food benefits easier to access and help integrate health care and local food into the charitable food system. For example, the office could expand access to the joint online portal and streamline applications for critical programs and elder feeding programs. Additionally, through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, this office could engage our agriculture industry and leverage our statewide charitable food system embedded in every community. It would also support the state's own domestic agricultural system, which has great potential to keep the whole of Massachusetts more food secure.

As we continue to emerge from this pandemic era and examine the inequities and gaps in access before us, we must recognize that systemic issues require not only an emergency response, but sustainable solutions and an interdisciplinary, statewide vision.

**We urge the committee to favorably report out S.2073 and H.3029** so that we can systemically address food insecurity across Massachusetts. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Catherine D'Amato  
President and CEO  
The Greater Boston Food Bank