

# **MAKE HUNGER HISTORY.**

The Make Hunger History Coalition represents over 200 organizations and over 750 individual members. Together, we imagine a Massachusetts where no family goes hungry, where every child has access to nourishing food, and where hunger is a thing of the past. This vision is within our reach, and Massachusetts is poised to lead the nation in ending food insecurity once and for all.

We believe our State Legislature plays a key role. As such, we solicited all who were not unopposed to answer the following questions.

|                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Name:</b>            | Persis Yu         |
| <b>Party:</b>           | Democratic        |
| <b>District:</b>        | Norfolk & Suffolk |
| <b>Position Sought:</b> | State Senator     |
| <b>Website:</b>         | electpersis.com   |

**What is your connection to or experience with hunger, food security, federal nutrition programs, or the food system, if any?**

*Candidate Answer: As a social worker and consumer attorney, I have worked for nearly two decades on behalf of working families, and I have seen firsthand the harms caused by food insecurity and other economic instability. As a volunteer with my church and my children's school, I have supported multiple food pantries and during COVID organized a grocery store gift card drive to help support families in my kids' school.*

*In Massachusetts and across the country, working people face a growing affordability crisis. This is a moment for change, and our communities deserve a State Senator who will fight as hard inside the State House as I've fought outside of it. My campaign is focused on ensuring everyone in Massachusetts has access to the food, housing, and health care they need not just to survive, but to thrive.*

**What do you believe is the role of the state government in ensuring everyone in our state has enough to eat and reducing the demand for emergency food resources?**

*Candidate Answer: My campaign is rooted in the belief that true democracy starts at home; that to defend democracy we need the government to deliver for*

*everyday people. While food banks and other emergency food programs provide critically important services, the state must do more to address both stagnant wages and rising costs so that everyone can afford to raise their families in the Commonwealth. As State Senator, I will fight to expand access to truly affordable health care, expand rent control and build more affordable housing, and invest in public goods that make our communities stronger.*

**What should the Commonwealth do to ensure robust access to effective anti-hunger programs such as SNAP?**

*Candidate Answer: Programs that don't reach the people who need them most are not working. As a social worker, I saw the administrative and time burden imposed on struggling families. The Commonwealth should increase funding to ensure adequate staffing (including ensuring these positions are paid livable wages) so that beneficiaries of anti-hunger programs like SNAP have the support they need—through these programs and as they hopefully transition away from these programs.*

**As a member of the Massachusetts legislature, would you advocate for state funds to hire the staff necessary to ensure every eligible low-income resident successfully accesses federally-funded nutrition benefits?**

*Candidate Answer: YES. It is critical that we ensure our communities know about resources available to them, and make sure residents can actually access those resources. The state can and should do more to connect people, particularly marginalized communities who have often been ignored, with public benefits, while we also work to address the cost of living crisis driving more and more people into distress.*

While hunger is a statewide issue that impacts a variety of demographics, certain populations experience it at disproportionately higher rates. For example, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, immigrants, members of LGBTQ+ community, and people with disabilities experience hunger at disproportionately higher rates.

**What do you believe are the primary factors driving these disparities, and what can government do to reduce them?**



Candidate Answer: *Systemic racism has driven staggering wealth disparities and unequal outcomes for Black and brown families across the Commonwealth. Across the board, Massachusetts must address these inequities in order to build a truly fair and inclusive economy. I will fight to establish clear protections in housing, employment, healthcare, education, and public accommodations—and real enforcement when rights are violated. I will also work to ensure strict firewalls between state services and federal agencies so no immigrant needs to fear for their safety when accessing public benefits.*

**What else would you like to share about your plans to address food insecurity and its root causes?**

Candidate Answer: *We live in the richest state in the richest country in the world and yet too many children are going hungry. Food insecurity is both inexcusable and preventable. I support increasing revenue to support critical social programs by closing tax loopholes through measures such as the corporate fair share amendment. To tackle the affordability crisis, we need to leverage every tool available. I would also hold corporations accountable for abusive practices that prevent workers from getting ahead and that make it expensive to be poor.*