

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.

Our representatives in Congress play a key role. As such, we solicited answer to the following questions.

Name:	Tarik Samman
Party:	Democratic
District:	Fifth
Website:	https://www.tarikforcongress.com/

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

Candidate Answer: During high school and college, I worked in the food service industry, including at Wendy's and Corner Bakery. Those experiences gave me a firsthand look at how the food industry often prioritizes profit over nutrition and long-term public health. I saw how healthier options were often more expensive or less accessible, while heavily processed foods were marketed as the most affordable and convenient choices.

These experiences made me think more critically about food security and the broader food system. Access to nutritious food should not depend on a family's income. While I have not worked directly on federal nutrition programs, my time in the food industry has given me a practical understanding of the challenges many working families face in accessing healthy, affordable food and reinforced my belief that public policy should support both food affordability and better nutrition.

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

Candidate Answer: *I believe the federal government plays a critical role in ensuring everyone has access to nutritious food by investing in effective safety net programs like SNAP, WIC, and school meals while addressing the root causes of food insecurity. Reducing demand for emergency food resources requires policies that promote economic stability, affordable housing, quality healthcare, and good-paying jobs.*

The federal government should work in partnership with states, local communities, and nonprofit organizations to strengthen food systems, advance health equity, and ensure resources reach those who need them most.

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

Candidate Answer: *Congress should strengthen and protect SNAP because it is one of the most effective anti-hunger programs in the country. With food costs rising and more families struggling to make ends meet, Congress should ensure SNAP benefits remain adequate, preserve eligibility for vulnerable populations, and provide states with the resources needed to administer the program efficiently.*

Equally important, Congress should support improvements to state administrative systems so eligible individuals can easily access and maintain their benefits. Long wait times and barriers to reaching caseworkers can prevent families from receiving the assistance they qualify for. Investing in both the program itself and the infrastructure that supports it will help reduce food insecurity and lessen the strain on emergency food providers.

As a member of Congress, would you advocate to ensure every eligible household is able to receive SNAP with minimal bureaucratic hurdles?

Candidate Answer: *There is absolutely no question about that. Food is a human right and everyone should have the right to access food with minimal bureaucratic hurdles. American citizens pay into these safety net systems for them to access in their times of need.*

Would you advocate for SNAP eligibility or benefits amounts to be expanded?

Candidate Answer: *Yes. Food is a human right, not a luxury, and it should be provided to people when they need it most. That starts with expanding SNAP eligibility and increasing benefit amounts.*

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: *Food insecurity is driven by systemic inequities that affect access to stable employment, affordable housing, healthcare, education, and transportation. These challenges disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and other historically marginalized communities, making it more difficult to consistently access nutritious food.*

The government can help reduce these disparities by strengthening nutrition programs like SNAP and WIC, investing in affordable housing and economic opportunity, improving access to healthcare, and ensuring public benefits are accessible and responsive to those who need them. Working in partnership with community organizations and using data to target resources can help address disparities and create more equitable outcomes for all residents.

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

Candidate Answer: *Food insecurity is also the result of political choices. For too long, our government has lacked the courage and political will to address its root causes because too many elected officials are more responsive to powerful special interests and campaign donors than to the people they represent.*

If we are serious about ending hunger, we must also reform our political system. That means reducing the influence of money in politics, strengthening democratic accountability, and ensuring that public dollars are invested in the needs of American families. I believe our government should prioritize affordable food, housing, healthcare, and education before spending billions of taxpayer dollars on unnecessary foreign conflicts and wars which is something Congress has the power to address.

Addressing food insecurity requires building a government that consistently puts people first. When our elected officials are accountable to voters instead of special interests, we can make ending hunger a national priority.