

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.

Name:	Connor Murray
Party:	Democratic
District:	18th Essex
Position Sought:	State Representative
Website:	www.murray4ma.com

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

Candidate Answer: I have seen hunger impact a wide variety of families across every economic and geographic category, and I've come to find it incredibly disturbing how quickly food insecurity can become a factor in a person's life. During my time as a volunteer with the Boys and Girls Club and a charitable organization delivering food to the family members of individuals who are facing deportation, I have heard heart-wrenching stories about families plunged into poverty by the unforeseen loss of a loved one. In a society where so many of us are living paycheck to paycheck, the unexpected loss of a financial provider - whether by deportation, death, medical emergency, or some other barrier to employment - can leave a working-class family struggling to pay for groceries after just a few weeks. As a state representative, I will have the opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of my neighbors and friends facing this injustice, and I consider it a privilege to serve them in their time of need.

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: *I believe the role of government is to lead by example and maintain a basic quality of life for all residents. Our state government should guarantee each and every person in the Commonwealth the opportunity to excel, regardless of their zip code or the circumstances they were born into. That includes honoring the basic human right to food, and ensuring that regular, nutritious meals are routinely accessible to every Massachusetts resident. State sponsored and subsidized food programs should not be available to a family only after they are already deeply undernourished. Furthermore, the cost of living - including healthcare, housing, and childcare - has spiraled out of control, negatively impacting working families and draining their day-to-day financial resources. It is the responsibility of government institutions to rein it in. Our leaders must be efficient, proactive, and committed to this cause if we are to truly eradicate hunger in Massachusetts.*

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

Candidate Answer: *The Commonwealth is facing an increasingly difficult situation as the federal government moves to limit access to programs like SNAP. The Massachusetts legislature must act to supplement these funds and ensure that not a single person in our state goes hungry due to political externalities. We must also focus on expanding opportunities for SNAP usage. The late Senator Edward J. Kennedy sponsored a bill which would have created a "Restaurant Meals Program" allowing homeless, elderly, and disabled individuals and their spouses to use SNAP benefits at participating restaurants across the Commonwealth. The passing of Senator Kennedy leaves this bill without a sponsor in both the Senate and the House. If I am elected, I would be proud to champion a bill like this in my first term.*

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 vital to the livelihoods of Massachusetts residents on SNAP that they be able to quickly connect to caseworkers, and I would support fully staffing the Department of Transitional Assistance to guarantee stronger accessibility.*



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: *Unfortunately, our nation has a long history of mistreatment toward certain minority demographics such as people of color, immigrants, and the disabled, and this has resulted in a lack of built-up generational wealth and opportunities that many more privileged members of our community are born into. This a core factor contributing to disproportionate hunger rates. Our state government has the responsibility to address this by combatting systemic discrimination in hiring practices, housing approvals, and other critical domains of life that allow people to build a basic foundation for themselves and their families. Also, it should go without saying that those elected to hold public office must actively model the acceptance of people who are different than us that we would hope to see from all members of our society. In other words, government leaders must be consistent allies and champions of the marginalized if we are to ever truly move past these issues.*

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

Candidate Answer: *If elected, there are several bills I intend to sponsor and cosponsor specifically regarding food insecurity. As I said previously, I would be honored to sponsor "An Act concerning food insecurity and supporting the restaurant industry," the bill formerly championed by Senator Kennedy. I also plan to cosponsor "An Act encouraging the donation of food to persons in need," which would reduce liability on organizations making direct donations of perishable food and create a tax credit for food businesses such as farms that donate food or crops to non-profit food distribution organizations. In addition to supporting legislation that directly combats food insecurity, I will fight to bring down the cost of living in Massachusetts via initiatives such as Medicare for All,*



rent control, universal pre-K, and a tax system where corporations and the ultrawealthy actually pay their fair share.