

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:	Lorena Betts
Party:	Democratic
District:	16th Middlesex
Position Sought:	State Representative
Website:	www.lorenabetts.com

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

Candidate Answer:

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: *The state has a responsibility to ensure every person in Massachusetts can access enough nutritious food. Emergency food providers are essential partners, but they should not be the only solution. We must address the root causes of hunger by making sure families can afford the basics, strengthening programs like SNAP and school meals, reducing barriers to accessing support, and investing in communities. When we address housing costs, wages, and economic insecurity, we reduce the need for emergency food resources.*

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

Candidate Answer: *The Commonwealth should ensure that programs like SNAP are accessible, effective, and easy to navigate for everyone who qualifies. This includes reducing unnecessary barriers to enrollment, improving outreach so eligible residents know about available resources, and ensuring timely support. We should also strengthen partnerships with community organizations that help families access benefits and address the root causes of food insecurity, including high housing costs and economic instability. No one in Massachusetts should go hungry because assistance is too difficult to access.*

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. I would advocate for state funding to ensure eligible residents can successfully access federally funded nutrition programs like SNAP. These programs only work if people can navigate the application process and receive the benefits they qualify for. Investing in outreach, enrollment assistance, and adequate staffing helps remove barriers for families, seniors, and individuals facing food insecurity while also ensuring Massachusetts maximizes the federal resources available to our residents.*

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: *Hunger disparities are driven by systemic inequities, including unequal access to economic opportunities, affordable housing, healthcare, transportation, and supportive services. Communities that have historically faced discrimination often experience greater barriers to achieving food security. Government must address these root causes while ensuring that anti-hunger programs are accessible to everyone who qualifies. This includes reducing*



barriers to programs like SNAP, supporting culturally responsive community organizations, investing in affordable housing and economic stability, and ensuring that policies are inclusive of all residents regardless of race, immigration status, disability, or identity.

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

Candidate Answer: As a legislator, I will work to ensure that families can access the resources they need while also addressing the root causes that push people into food insecurity. This means strengthening programs like SNAP, supporting local food access initiatives, investing in affordable housing and economic stability, and making sure government programs are accessible and responsive to the people they serve.

No one in Massachusetts should have to choose between paying the rent, buying medicine, and putting food on the table.