

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:	Steven Leibowitz
Party:	Democratic
District:	1st Barnstable
Position Sought:	State Representative
Website:	Stevenforstaterep.com

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

Candidate Answer: This is something I have firsthand experience with as a child and having received SNAP as an adult. I have worked on a variety of food access projects with Project Bread, MLRI, the Mass Food System Collaborative and Mass Farm to School. I am an advisory board member of Make Hunger History.

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: We commonly say in this work, we know how to solve hunger, we need the political will to do so. I am an advocate for the bold actions needed to respond to an increasing crisis, not only directly, but in root causes like housing costs and a livable wage.

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

Candidate Answer: *The most pressing need is to staff up DTA. In 2 of my towns, we have lost over 19 and 20% of individuals receiving SNAP. That is at least partially due to DTA having a hang up call rate over 70% of people needing to speak to someone. Unacceptable. While the state has been good this year to MEFAP and HIP, and should continue to do so, I return to the idea of the underlying structural issues. Finally, we do not talk enough about lack of food access as a public health need.*

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: *Without hesitation.*

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 and some people's personal biases affect everything, access to food and good nutrition is no exception. As we have as a state and country, targeting responses to help all these affected groups needs action.*

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

Candidate Answer: *Obviously this is a priority for me, but as I have said, it is part of what I see as a comprehensive need to respond to issues of poverty. Massachusetts has plenty of inequities in state systems that could produce revenue needed to respond to these things better. I support the Corporate Fair Share ballot initiative and think we need to examine the minimum corporate excise tax of \$456. There are companies with over \$1 billion in sales that somehow only pay that minimum. I won't back down when people say you will*



scare off corporations because the same kind of argument was made about Fair Share, which has brought in more revenue than even backers anticipated.