

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:	Peter Meaney
Party:	Democratic
District:	9th Essex
Position Sought:	State Representative
Website:	www.peteforrep.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 worked in a professional setting as both a healthcare provider and a city councilor to help with food needs and making referrals where needed. I have witnessed how food insecurity impacts local schools, health, and workforce stability. Being familiar with what programs are available to provide guidance and support is essential.*

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 state government's role in ensuring food security and reducing emergency reliance is to build a proactive economic safety net, streamline federal nutrition programs, and tackle the root causes of poverty. Strategies would include strengthening economic supports, such as a boosting state-level tax credits, and maximizing and expanding nutrition programs.*

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

Candidate Answer: *To ensure robust access to effective anti-hunger programs, the Commonwealth should fully fund state administrative infrastructure, protect and expand local nutrition incentives, and fortify the emergency food network.*

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 funds to hire staff necessary to ensure every eligible low-income resident successfully accesses federally-funded nutrition benefits.*

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: *I believe primary drivers of hunger disparities include systemic economic inequality, neighborhood food environments, and historical discrimination. To reduce these gaps, the government can expand nutrition benefits, invest in local food access, and raise economic floors.*

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

Candidate Answer: *Beyond immediate hunger, the core driver of food insecurity is systemic economic pressure—specifically the impossible balance between high housing costs, low wages, and expensive medical or utility bills. Solving this requires looking at food access as not an isolated issue, but as a symptom of broader economic inequality and lack of affordable community resources. Long-term solutions must focus on structural changes like living wages, affordable housing, and robust public nutrition support.*



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

Name:	Zosia VanMeter
Party:	Democratic
District:	9th Essex
Position Sought:	State Representative
Website:	www.electzvm.com

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

Candidate Answer: I am extremely active with in the hunger and food insecurity efforts in my community. I founded the Athena Project in Lynn with the aim at expanding free food resources across our city. The mission is to install food pantries in Lynn with non-perishable foods. We have recently began installing some of these stations within the city. I am extremely passionate about supporting my neighbors who might be facing food insecurity.

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 state government as it relates to food resources is to support policy which will lower prices and lead to easier access to quality foods. I am proud that Massachusetts has taken initiative to provide free school lunch options for all students, however I believe it is the role of the Commonwealth to better support our youth who are most greatly impacted by food insecurity. I am in support of stronger efforts by Massachusetts to expand investment towards food access.

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

Candidate Answer: *Anti-hunger programs such as SNAP provide a basic food safety net for struggling individuals and families. It is the role of government to help expand access by limiting barriers to entry for its programs. The Commonwealth needs to allocate more resources towards educating our residents on the options that might exist for them regarding food security.*

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, as a member of the legislature I would strongly advocate for state funds to hire the appropriate staff to ensure every single eligible low-income resident receives federally-funded nutrition benefits.*

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: *Historical lack of investment and racial zoning practices are two big components of the problem. Food insecurity needs to be addressed with a wholistic approach. We need to break down the barriers to access that disproportionately affect Black, Indigenous, other persons of color, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and people with disabilities. I believe in reforming zoning practices and development incentives to promote better options in neighborhoods which have historically struggled with food access.*

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



Candidate Answer: *This is a cause which is extremely close to my heart. I dedicate a significant part of my time towards supporting my neighbors who may be facing food insecurity. I look forward to continuing to seek the Make Hunger History endorsement in the 9th Essex State Representative race.*