

2024 Food Insecurity Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Arielle Faria [D]

District: House Seat
Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket



1

Why does combatting food insecurity matter to you?

As a single mother of two teenage boys, I know and understand how important it is for a parent to set her children up for success by ensuring that they are properly nourished. As a woman of color, I know that food insecurity is an issue that disproportionately impacts the Black community. As someone who lives in a district with extreme wealth and poverty, it's important for me to highlight the issue for our lower-to-middle-income community members who are our most vulnerable residents and who need a helping hand to help make ends meet.

2

How has food insecurity changed over the past five years in your district?

Food insecurity has steadily increased over the past few years. As someone active in my community, I have seen attendance at our local food bank grow year after year. Sadly, this has disproportionately impacted our communities of color, communities who often feel unseen in the district. The pandemic truly brought the issue out into the open and local food banks have worked admirably to ensure that those impacted by COVID continued to receive support even after the community gradually recovered. It's critical that this food bank and others continue to receive needed funding to sustain their operations.

3

In your opinion, what are the primary drivers of food insecurity in your district?

Two words: income inequality. The cost of living on the Cape and the Islands has increased so much over the past few years that we now have families barely holding on to maintain their residence in the region. Many of these are families of color who have long-standing ties to the area and are in the process of raising their children. To continue to reside in the district, these families will often seek out ways to get less expensive food and the food banks end up being the only viable option for them.

4

What specific policies or legislation do you support to address food insecurity in Massachusetts?

I support making the free school lunch program permanent. We've seen remarkable success here in the district after only one year and there's no reason that the state legislature shouldn't commit to investing in the program long-term. I also support legislation that holds large food producers accountable for their current wave of price gouging. We've seen these producers take advantage of rising inflation by overly inflating the price of their goods while simultaneously paying their CEOs multimillion-dollar bonuses. If elected, I would sponsor legislation that holds these producers accountable for their price gouging.

5

How will you continue to ensure that all your constituents have access to nourishing food?

If elected, I would work closely with nonprofits in my district as well as our local food bank to identify ways to bring in funding during the annual state budget. As a state representative, I realize I would have a unique opportunity to bring funding back to key areas of need. I see food insecurity as a critical issue on the Cape and the Islands and I would work tirelessly during the budget season to secure funding for organizations that are on the ground and that are already going above and beyond to help serve our most vulnerable communities.