

# 2024 Food Insecurity Candidate Questionnaire

**Candidate: Bill Humphrey [D]**

**District: 12th Middlesex House Seat  
Brookline, Newton**



**1**

### **Why does combatting food insecurity matter to you?**

A growing and significant share of residents in my district, as well as Massachusetts as a whole, are grappling with food insecurity. This is dangerous to public health, stressful and destabilizing to those experiencing it, and a moral failing for a wealthy 21st century civilization. I want Massachusetts to be a Commonwealth for everyone and that means everyone has enough to eat.

**2**

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

Food insecurity was already on the rise in my district before the pandemic (something I talked about in my first Council campaign), and it continues to grow. It is often semi-invisible in wealthy suburban districts where many residents mistakenly assume no one is poor, but food insecurity is here, and the food pickup lines outside our food banks are getting longer. In 2023, I was given a tour of the Centre Street Food Pantry by a constituent on the board, and they reported demand in the wider region was outstripping capacity and more three-generation families were showing up in need.

**3**

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

Some residents find themselves living in this district but also find themselves financially insecure after a change in circumstances and cut off from the ability to access resources or even to move away. Sometimes workers don't have a way to get to work from here or have a disability that affects their ability to work or get around, and many elders have become isolated in homes they can't afford to move out of and struggle to maintain. Even a small setback can make the difference in a resident's ability to afford food. Grocery prices have also shot up recently.

**4**

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

We need to fully fund the new universal school meals program and commit to ending child hunger completely in Massachusetts. We must end poverty wages that leave working people unable to feed themselves and their families on their wages alone without government aid or private charity. I support the proposed "agricultural healthy incentives program" that would better integrate the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with farmers' markets and other opportunities to buy fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers. I also support the proposal to incentivize and legally protect surplus food donation to people in need.

**5**

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

The best things we can do for access to nourishing food are:

- Institute universal programs to remove the paperwork and income verification barriers that make access difficult, time-consuming, or embarrassing
- Improve public transit (and last-mile ride) infrastructure so people can get to and from resources and jobs
- Encourage the establishment of affordable, walkable grocery store locations more widely dispersed geographically so that more people can get to them independently
- Legally ease and encourage growing food in urban and suburban residential neighborhoods for personal and community use