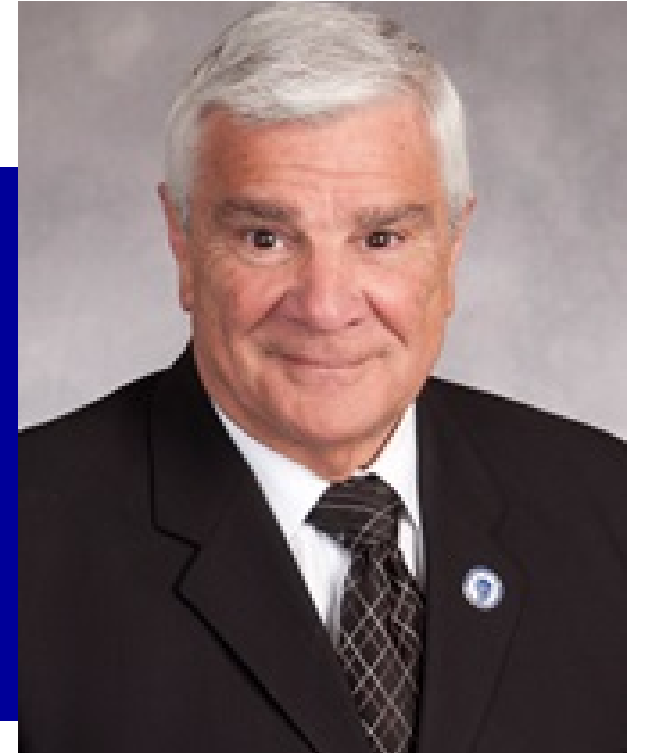


2024 Food Insecurity Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Representative Paul Donato [D]

**District: 35th Middlesex House Seat-
Malden, Medford**



1 Why does combatting food insecurity matter to you?

Growing up poor in the Mission Hill area of Boston, I know the effects that food insecurity has on any person, they are devastating and long-lasting. I ran for office and continue to serve to help people like myself grow out of poverty and do everything in my power to protect the most vulnerable populations, especially those who are struggling with food insecurity. In my many years of public service, I have passed bills to make food less expensive and seen the power of good government on food insecurity.

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

Covid and the housing crisis have dramatically changed the people of my district's ability to have the proper food. Covid exacerbated a deepening crisis, in housing and food insecurity. People in Medford and Malden were left without jobs and the ability to care for themselves. Older residents unable to live on their fixed incomes, younger residents having to leave, and many more struggling to pay.

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

Lack of housing and rising prices are the leading factors. Massachusetts is a wonderful place to live, and we rank very high in innumerable categories. However, we rank towards the bottom in housing affordability. This leaves us with people who are using most or all of their paychecks to cover their housing. We must work to lower the price of housing and build more of it and the housing bond bill that passed this legislative session is a great start. Rising prices in the grocery stores have led to inadequate food for many as well.

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

I was a sponsor of the Housing Bond Bill, Permanent free lunches in the Commonwealth, and a lead sponsor of the senior food program, Meals on Wheels. I have always worked with children, seniors, and other populations at a greater risk of food insecurity, and I will continue to do that.

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

I will work to pass even more legislation that tackles the underlying causes of food insecurity. I will also continue to listen to my constituents and members of my city government—that I work closely with—to work to end food insecurity.