

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 4453

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 6, 2024.

The committee on Higher Education, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 835) of Joan B. Lovely, Michael O. Moore, Sal N. DiDomenico, Robyn K. Kennedy and other members of the General Court for legislation to establish the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Initiative and the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1293) of Andres X. Vargas, Mindy Domb and others for legislation to establish a hunger-free campus grant program, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4453) ought to pass.

For the committee,

DAVID M. ROGERS.

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4453**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
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An Act establishing the hunger-free campus initiative.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

2 Section 46: Hunger-Free Campus Program

3 (a) Subject to appropriation, there shall be a hunger-free campus grant program managed  
4 by the department to provide grants to institutions of higher education to address student food  
5 insecurity and hunger. This grant program shall also be available to municipally administered  
6 colleges. The department shall develop and implement a grant application and review process for  
7 any grants allocated under this program.

8 Using funding allocated under the grant program, the department is authorized to hire a  
9 director of the program who shall report to the commissioner. The director, in consultation with  
10 the commissioner, shall develop guidelines and procedures governing the grant making process  
11 and the program using available data pertaining to student hunger. The director may also conduct  
12 any additional surveys the department deems necessary to understand gaps in addressing student  
13 food insecurity and hunger on eligible higher education campuses across the commonwealth.

14           The guidelines and procedures that govern the program shall specify any requirements  
15 applicable to eligible institutions of higher education in order to apply and qualify for grants  
16 under the program, including, but not limited to: (i) whether the institution has designated  
17 campus staff to interface with the department; (ii) the existence and extent of any campus-level  
18 hunger awareness programs, including notification to students of their rights to participate in  
19 federal and state food assistance programs; (iii) whether the institution has established on-  
20 campus meal vendors to accept available federal and state nutrition benefits; (iv) the existence or  
21 development of a student meal credit sharing program; (v) income based standards by which  
22 grant levels are determined according to the student population at each participating campus; and  
23 (vi) any other pertinent criteria as developed by the department. The department may further  
24 develop and deliver technical assistance to assist eligible institutions of higher education to meet  
25 the goals of this program.

26           (b) Subject to appropriation, the department shall award grants to institutions that have  
27 met the guidelines and procedures established by the department and have submitted an  
28 application to the department for a grant under this program. Upon recommendation by the  
29 director of the program, the commissioner, or a designee, shall determine the amount of each  
30 grant which shall be used by the institution to address food insecurity among its students in  
31 accordance with the program and shall establish reporting guidelines for grant recipients.

32           (c) Annually, not later than July 1, the department shall submit a report on the hunger-  
33 free campus grant program for the preceding fiscal year to the governor, the clerks of the senate  
34 and house of representatives and the joint committee on higher education. The report shall  
35 include the number and amounts of grants to eligible institutions well as a comprehensive  
36 assessment of the program for the applicable year, including: (i) identifying the institutions

37 participating in the program; (ii) describing the activities of participating campuses in response  
38 to hunger and food insecurity in students; (iii) the level of student engagement in activities; and  
39 (iv) the outcomes resulting from activities.

40 The report shall also provide information on hunger-free campus grantmaking, including:  
41 (A) the number and amounts of the grant awards, (B) the recipients of such awards; (C) the  
42 activities supported by awards; (D) the impact of the program in reducing the number of students  
43 experiencing food insecurity; and (E) recommendations on any changes to the program.

44 SECTION 2. Chapter 29 of the General Law is hereby amended by inserting after section  
45 200000 the following new section:-

46 Section 2PPPPP. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the  
47 commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Hunger-Free Campus Trust Fund  
48 administered by the commissioner of higher education. The fund shall be credited with: (i)  
49 revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and specifically  
50 designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iii) funds from  
51 public and private sources such as gifts, grants and donations. Amounts credited to the fund shall  
52 not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal  
53 year shall not revert to the General Fund.

54 (b) Amounts credited to the fund shall be used to fund grants made pursuant to the  
55 program, and for the cost of administration of such program by the department of higher  
56 education.

57 (c) Amounts received from private sources shall be approved by the commissioner of  
58 higher education and subject to review before being deposited in the fund to ensure that pledged

59 funds are not accompanied by conditions, explicit or implicit, on the implementation of the  
60 Massachusetts Hunger-free College Grant Program that may be detrimental to the program. The  
61 review shall be made publicly available.

62 (d) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner shall report to the clerks of the  
63 house of representatives and senate, the joint committee on higher education and the house and  
64 senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activity. The report shall include, but not be  
65 limited to: (i) the source and amount of funds received; (ii) the amounts distributed and the  
66 purpose of expenditures from the fund; (iii) any grants provided to institutions of higher  
67 education and other stakeholder organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure  
68 projections for the next year.