

Human Services Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7021

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR NUTRITION ASSISTANCE.

Vote Date: 3/5/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/27/2025

File No.: 119

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Human Services Committee

CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Norman Needleman
Rep. Julio A. Concepcion
Rep. William Heffernan
Rep. Aundre Bumgardner
Sen. Paul Honig
Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes
Sen. Christine Cohen
Rep. Gary A. Turco
Rep. Christopher Poulos
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Rep. Jill Barry
Rep. Chris Aniskovich
Rep. Tammy R. Exum
Sen. Jorge Cabrera
Rep. Nicole Klarides-Ditria

REASONS FOR BILL:

Food insecurity in Connecticut is rising while food prices are increasing. Access to nutritious food from local sources improves health outcomes and worker productivity while supporting local producers, and ultimately stimulating the local economy. This bill would require the Department of Social Services to establish a program to provide funds for nutritious foods for food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters. The foods would be purchased by the Connecticut Foodshare. At least fifteen percent of the funds must be used to purchase foods from state farmers. The pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters would pay a handling fee of up to five cents per pound of food to cover the costs. This bill attempts to address food insecurity in Connecticut. The funds would support organizations that help food insecure individuals.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity, Christian Duborg, Nutrition Policy Analyst:](#) supports this bill because food pantries need more support. Food insecurity has increased in the past few years, so organizations that are helping those who are food insecure have seen increased costs but not increased funding. This bill would give them the funding they need while also helping local farmers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut State [Representative Aundre Bumgardner](#) supports this bill because adequate nutrition is important for public health. This bill would improve public health while also supporting local farms and helping the economy. The annual funding increase would also ensure that these goals are met even with inflation.

[Chip Beckett](#) supports this bill because it would benefit the 1 in 8 people in Connecticut facing food insecurity while also helping local farmers.

[Heidi Borkowski](#) supports this bill because their church hands out backpacks of food, and they have seen firsthand how much of an impact access to healthy food can make.

[Stephana Bottom:](#)

[Cortney Coates:](#)

[St Vincent de Paul Place Executive Director, Jillian Corbin:](#)

[Steve Deane:](#)

[Joe DeFrancesco:](#)

[Crescenzo DeLuca:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare Board of Directors Member, Molly Devanney:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare Connecticut Neighborhood Council Member, Wendy Ennis:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare Executive Assistant, Bonnie Francis:](#)

[Bruce Gresczyk Jr.:](#)

[Blue Hills Orchard President, Eric Henry:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare, Chief of Staff, Jennie Hirsch:](#)

[Alejandro G. Davila-Hurtado:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare President & CEO, Jason Jakubowski:](#)

[Food Pantry Director, Maria Jiminez:](#)

[Themis Klarides:](#)

[Reverend Jose Martinez:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare Network Resources Intern, Nevada McMahon:](#)

[Mahara farms LLC Owner & Founder, Juliet Munhenga:](#)

[Steve Munno:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare, Senior Director of Network Relations, Miranda Muro:](#)

[Karen Parnter:](#)

[Connecticut Food Association President Wayne Pesce:](#)

[Belltown Hill Orchards Owner, Donald Preli:](#)

[New Haven Inner City Enrichment Director, Jamilah Rasheed:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare Board Member, Kayla Reasco:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare Resource and Engagement Coordinator Jackie Riberdy:](#)

[Rosa Rizzo:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare CEO Tino Rovero:](#)

[Connecticut Foodshare Program Coordinator, Institute for Hunger Research & Solutions,](#)

[Olivia Rua:](#)

[Melanie Sanclemente:](#)

[Cynthia Sandoval:](#)

[Peter Sannizzaro:](#)

[Farmington Food Pantry President, Kristen Skulte:](#)

[Sprague Food Bank Senior Coordinator, James Smith:](#)

[Xiomara Torres:](#)

[Joseph Preli Farm & Vineyard, John Yushkevich:](#) supports this bill because 1 in 8 people in Connecticut are food insecure, including 1 in 6 children. Helping the Connecticut Foodshare will help those people as well as helping farmers and the local economy. This bill would allow Connecticut to invest the same amount in their people as neighboring states do when it comes to food insecurity.

[Paul Bourdon](#) supports this bill because in their experience volunteering at a food pantry, there has been a decrease in healthy choices. This bill; would help bring back access to healthy food choices.

[Albert Calixto](#) supports this bill.

[Connecticut Foodshare, Brittney Cavaliere, Senior Director of Strategy:](#) supports this bill because CT Foodshare has given out millions of meals, and they need more support. This bill would help them provide more meals as well as helping the struggling people in their community.

[Lathrop Farm Owner, Angela Mia Colasuonno](#) supports this bill because Connecticut Foodshare provides so many meals for people in need, but CT-NAP is only able to fund 1% of it. Increasing funding would help CT Foodshare help more people.

[Verna Creary](#) supports this bill because they work for a food pantry and feel they need to be able to provide more food to people.

[nOURish Bridgeport Director, Tshon Cooper-Davi](#) supports this bill because they would be unable to run their food pantry without Connecticut Foodshare, and this bill would help support Connecticut Foodshare.

[United Way of Greater New Haven, Food Security Community Impact Manager, Mike Degen:](#)
[Witnesses to Hunger member, Susan Harris:](#)
[CitySeed Director of Agriculture, Kaitlyn Kimball:](#)
[New Haven Board of Alders member, Sarah Miller:](#)
[Beulah Heights Social Integration Program executive Director, Blanche Reeves Tucker:](#)
[Southern Connecticut State University Senior Director of Community Initiatives, Alycia Santilli:](#)
[Greater New Haven & Quinnipiac Chambers of Commerce President & CEO, Garrett Sheehan:](#)

supports this bill because the funding it would provide would be crucial in helping the New Haven residents that they serve that are facing hunger at a time when hunger is at a high there.

[Varick Food Pantry Coordinator, Kim DiBenedetto](#) supports this bill because they believe the state needs to continue to support those facing food insecurity.

[Cynthia Dorfman](#) supports this bill because they have been a longtime volunteer at a food shelter and see how much of a need there is for nutritional support.

[Park City Initiative Corp, Mary Green, Executive Director:](#) supports this bill because the funding it provides would be critical for pantries like theirs and the families they serve.

[New Covenant Center, John Gutman, Executive Director:](#) supports this bill because they have been struggling to provide people with the same quality and amount of food as they usually do due to increased prices and high demand.

[Barbara Hunter](#) supports this bill because they volunteer at a food pantry, and they struggle to keep up with increased need.

[Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, Paul Larson, President:](#)
[Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, Executive Director:](#)

supports this bill because they would help food pantries to continue supporting their communities while also helping local farms and boosting the economy.

[Timothy MacDonald](#) supports this bill because the funding would directly affect the services people would have access to.

[Jennifer Orzell](#) supports this bill because the pantry they volunteer at has seen a major increase in people relying on them and these organizations need more support.

[Chris Psillas](#) supports this bill because they volunteer at a pantry that has been unable to keep up with increased demand due to lack of funding. These organizations need funding and support.

[Brenda Reilly](#) supports this bill because the funding would provide the community with the food it needs.

[Connecticut Foodshare, Merry Renduchintala, Director of StoryShare:](#) supports this bill because it would help vulnerable communities who need the support.

[Fishes and Loaves, Louise Riley, Pantry Executive Director](#): supports this bill because their pantry relies on Connecticut Foodshare who would benefit from this funding. They need the support because the number of families coming to them has increased.

[The Mission Services Community Health Team of Hartford HealthCare, St. Vincent's Medical Center, Kendall Palladino, Marilyn Faber, Edna Borchetta and Lauren Davidson](#): support this bill because the growing demand for services exceeds the current amount of support. This bill would provide crucial funding.

[Samantha Rosado](#) supports this bill.

[Friendship Service Center CEO, Caitlin Rose](#) supports this bill because it would help organizations like theirs to provide more meals for people in need.

[The Hartford Foundation](#) supports this bill because it would help families facing food insecurity. The people the foundation supports would benefit from this bill. They believe it will be another step towards eradicating food insecurity.

[Milford Food Banks Coordinator, Meghan Tatro](#) supports this bill because Connecticut is one of the wealthiest states and yet people struggle with food insecurity. This bill would address that.

[Dawn Tavolieri](#) supports this bill because with rising prices, people are unable to afford both food and their other bills. This would help them at least pay for food.

[American Heart Association, Government Relations Director, Jim Williams](#) supports this bill because a lot of people are food insecure, but most of them are children. This bill would allow Connecticut to protect these vulnerable groups.

[Ralph Williams](#) supports this bill because it would provide support the families who need it urgently.

[Caring for Bethlehem, Financial Secretary, Rick Wood](#) supports this bill because it would allow organizations to provide more meals for people who need them.

[Anonymous](#) supports this bill

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Julia Cabral

Date: 4/2/2025