

Good morning Chairman Dolan, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Michael Iberis and I am the Director of the Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley.

In 1994, the Food Bank became a certified member of Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization.

Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley solicits, stores, and distributes food to hunger-relief organizations in Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties; and provides education and advocacy. We believe that no one should go hungry, and we are dedicated to building a community that makes food accessible to all people.

The Food Bank experienced a 40% increase in the number of families seeking food assistance due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This impact from COVID-19 is expected to be felt for the next 18 – 24 months.

A huge reduction in donations has been experienced by The Food Bank as well. This reduction required us to use funds from General Operations to purchase foods to help meet the increased demand for emergency assistance.

Throughout the course of the pandemic many emergency providers closed and some have even closed permanently.

A Traveling Food Pantry was implemented by the Food Bank. This was utilized to meet the increased need and to reduce the demand on our already strained network. The Traveling Food Pantry provided a rapid response to emergency needs.

After speaking with Darby, a stay at home mother of three and several others in the community, it's very apparent that the communities have all been impacted and the demand for assistance has continued to increase. Darby mentioned that until recently she had never had to utilize a food pantry or food distribution. Her fiancé provided for their family but he was unable to work for several months in the beginning of the Pandemic. Although he is now back to work, his hours have been reduced drastically and they are still struggling to get back on their feet.

I'm submitting written testimony to ask for your consideration and support of Amendments SC2155 and SC2155X1 to H.B. 110, which would provide a one-time-only, temporary 2-year funding increase of \$20 million per year in Section 307.40 to help provide: emergency food assistance relief through the Ohio Association of Foodbanks Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program; other essential household non-food items that can't be purchased with SNAP benefits; and a \$1 million investment per year to support capacity building for local hunger relief organizations to ensure hard-hit communities don't lose local access to charitable relief.

Thank you for your consideration of this request,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Iberis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.