



**Representative Dave Dobos**  
**10<sup>th</sup> House District**

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for allowing my joint sponsor, Representative Brennan, and me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 590.

As my colleague just outlined, this bill will help provide needed nutritional support for many of our college students.

To achieve this, House Bill 590 asks the Chancellor of Higher Education to establish the hunger-free campus grant and designation program. It sets aside up to \$2.5 million in FY 2025 that the Chancellor can award in the form of grants to qualifying universities and community colleges, prioritizing institutions with higher percentages of Pell grant-eligible students enrolled. Institutions must use the grants to support or leverage existing basic needs infrastructure, maximize federal programs, and build strategic partnerships at the local, state, and/or national levels to address food insecurity among students, and raise awareness of resources available to address their basic food needs.

The bill also requires the Chancellor to develop an application process for a qualifying institution to receive a hunger-free campus designation. The Chancellor would award a hunger-free campus designation to each qualifying institution that the he determines satisfies two conditions.

To meet the first condition, a qualifying institution must either: 1. Provide free meals to students who have demonstrated food insecurity or establish campus emergency funds for such students; or 2. Assist students with accessing food pantries or charitable food distributions by establishing an on-campus food pantry or charitable distribution.

To satisfy the second condition for a hunger-free campus designation under the bill, a qualifying institution also must meet at least three of the five following criteria: 1. Ensure that students

have access to accurate and current information about the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), other available food assistance programs, and programs that support basic needs security, including program eligibility, application processes, and how to use program benefits. An institution may satisfy this criteria by doing any one of the following:

- a. Including information on food assistance and basic needs security programs in all financial aid information;
- b. Including information on food assistance and basic needs security programs in new student orientation materials;
- c. Including information on food assistance and basic needs security programs in each course syllabus; or
- d. Posting information on food assistance and basic needs security programs in all on-campus housing locations;

2. Designate at least one on-campus employee who students may contact for information about SNAP, other available food assistance programs, and programs that support basic needs security;
3. Notify, on an individual basis, students who receive need-based financial aid of their potential eligibility to receive benefits under SNAP;
4. Conduct an anonymous, campus-wide survey assessing student food security at least once every two years;
5. Sponsor at least one event per academic semester to spread awareness about student hunger and provide information to students about services available on campus to alleviate student hunger.

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Agriculture Committee, I humbly ask for your support of this legislation, which is crucial to curb food insecurity which does exist on our college campuses, and, in turn, will allow such students to maximize their potential in the classroom. Thank you again for your time today. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.