



Second Harvest Food Bank of  
Champaign, Clark, and Logan Counties  
20 N. Murray St.  
Springfield, Oh 45504  
[www.theshfb.org](http://www.theshfb.org)  
(937) 325-8715

Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
Audrey Vanzant, Development Manager  
Director May 25, 2023  
Amended House Bill 33  
Written Testimony

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino and Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testify on the state of hunger in Ohio.

My name is Audrey Vanzant and I represent Second Harvest Food Bank of Champaign, Clark, and Logan Counties located in Springfield, Ohio. We serve the tri-county region, serving nearly 68,000 individuals a year.

Second Harvest Food Bank CCL made the decision to separate from our parent organization, Catholic Charities in January 2020. Eager to start as our own independent non-profit, we were shortly thereafter wrecked by the COVID-19 Pandemic as did the rest of our nation. During the pandemic, our food bank saw record numbers of individuals and families served. We broke at the time records serving nearly 68,000 individuals, double what we were doing pre-pandemic. However, we weren't expecting our service numbers to continue to remain higher than they were pre-pandemic. We are now serving nearly 30% more than we were in 2019, with fewer resources.

Our food donations from the public are down 32% from last year and our USDA donations are down 56% from years prior. This is due to cancelled loads because of supply chain issues. Not to mention the impact it has had on the entire economy and society. Our donors who were once giving \$20 a month now need that \$20 for their household, or those who were able to grab a couple extra cans at the store to donate now need that food for their own livelihood, decreasing monetary and food donations.

We continue to see the need increase, including an 8% increase in Logan County neighbors and 16% increase in Champaign County neighbors served as of March 2023, as emergency SNAP allotments ended in February. In March of 2023, we supplied 120,000lbs of food *per week* to our neighbors through programs and partner agencies. However, as of today, we only have 765,000 pounds of product in the warehouse. If we continue to see cancelled loads of food and decrease donations due to supply chain and inflation, we will run out of food in 44 days. Our goal at SHFB is to always have a 10-week supply of food on hand. We are currently sitting for a little over 6 weeks and that deeply concerns us.

Other things that concern us here at Second Harvest Food Bank of Champaign, Clark, and Logan Counties is that we are seeing an unfortunate increase in deaths and illness. This is due mostly to our elderly population, as well as the long-term effects from COVID. SHFB believes that **food is health**. We are seeing more and more people, especially elderly folks who are seeking assistance from the food banks for nutritious and healthy food to combat their health issues. We know that a "healthy diet" costs 4x what "junk-food" costs. As our senior citizens must decide between paying for their medication or putting food on the table (often time for the grandchildren they are raising) they are coming to not only SHFB for help but also to our 65+ partner agencies for assistance.



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*“At Caring Kitchen, we heard from an elderly woman in our local community, Karen, who stops in for the free food items that we make available each week for those in need. She has become a familiar face to us, as we see her frequently. Karen reported last week how much she loves Caring Kitchen thanks to all the fresh foods we have provided to her as she helps herself in our dining room. She said that thanks to her eating fresh fruits and veggies, she has lost 65 pounds and is in the best health she has been in years. We at Caring Kitchen were very encouraged by this, and hope that you at Second Harvest Foodbank will be as well since you have provided us with so many of these healthy food items that we have passed along here in Champaign County.” – Melissa, Caring Kitchen: a Champaign County partner agency of SHFB*

We humbly request your consideration of the following amendments to HB 33. Support of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks amendment SC0437 that will provide an additional \$10.45 million per year to support the purchase of 100 million pounds of food through the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance programs from Ohio farmers, growers, and commodity producers and to provide this food to food insecure and hungry Ohioans.

We are also asking for support of amendment SC 0227 that provides a modest temporary minimum monthly benefit of just \$50 for up to 70,000 low-income seniors on SNAP whose benefits dropped from \$281 per month to \$23.00 per month. Older Ohioans (age 60+) now make up nearly 1 in 4 of all food pantry visitors across Ohio. Visits to food pantries by older Ohioans increased by 107% over the decade leading up to the pandemic and have continued to accelerate. During the pandemic, some older Ohioans with incomes low enough to qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) received Emergency Allotments that boosted their benefit amounts. Those benefits ended after February 2023. This amendment appropriates \$21,415,000 in each fiscal year in GRF ALI 600564, SNAP State Supplement.

If this amendment keeps 329 seniors aging in place and at home, instead of going into a nursing home at a cost of \$65,000 per person, per year, the program becomes cost neutral.

Support of these amendments allows neighbors like Karen to continue to receive fresh, nutritious, and locally-grown produce, protein, and grains from our farmers. Karen can combat her health and financial issues, while supporting the Ohio economy, workforce and many of our small-town heroes, farmers, and producers. In doing so, she is also able to provide for herself and her grandchildren without having to make the difficult decision between food and medication. No one should have to decide which life saving measure they'll budget for every week. Food is health. Farmers are heroes. Senior Citizens are our neighbors. Your support is their future.

**These highly effective hunger lifelines provide 1 out of every 4 meals we distribute.** We hope you will support our Agricultural Clearance Program and Ohio Food Program through the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. It is a critical lifeline to supplement the additional needs of our 12 Ohio network foodbanks.

Thank you for your consideration.



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Your partner in hunger relief,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Audrey Vanzant'.

**Audrey Vanzant**  
**Development Manager**  
**Second Harvest Food Bank CCL**  
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Springfield, OH 45503  
(937) 325-8715 ext. 102  
[avanzant@theshfb.org](mailto:avanzant@theshfb.org)  
[www.theshfb.org](http://www.theshfb.org)