



Get to Know the Candidates

Vote Against Hunger

November 30, 2022

Our mission is to connect people and communities in Massachusetts to reliable sources of food while advocating for policies that make food more accessible—so that no one goes hungry. As such, Project Bread asked all candidates who were not unopposed incumbents to answer a few questions about their views on anti-hunger initiatives.

Name: Teresa English

Party: Democratic

District: 22nd Middlesex

Position Sought: State Representative

Website: www.VoteTeresaEnglish.org

What is your experience with the federal nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), school, summer, and after school, meals, or the Women, Infant, and Child (WIC) program?

Healthy food issues are personal to me and integral to my lived experience. As a high school teacher in Lawrence, it was easy to see the impact food had on students and their families. Numerous students arrived hungry and would have stayed that way if not for free breakfasts. Free lunches have always been vital for learning students and public opinion is strongly in favor as well. As the founder of the Billerica Community Farmers market, I have expanded access to healthy food for my neighbors and provided opportunities for local farmers to reach new communities. I have made healthy food more accessible in my own community by spearheading the effort to make sure that vendors at the Community Farmers Market accept SNAP. Federal nutrition assistance programs are vital to communities. Programs such as SNAP, WIC, and the Healthy Incentives Program are critical in ensuring all community members have adequate access to nutritional food. As a young mother who struggled to make ends meet, I relied on WIC for my children and am thankful for the healthy teenagers I have today - I know it is a direct result of good nutrition when they were young.





What are your plans for working in partnership with those with recent or current lived experience of food insecurity to inform and implement solutions?

If I am elected, I will increase funding for regional food banks, work to enhance health and wellness literacy courses, and fund subsidized grocery deliveries that target food desert communities with high poverty rates. Educating our children on food literacy is of the utmost importance in ensuring that our children will eat healthy and will have continuous access to nutritious meals. Should I be elected, I will support S.349/H.686 and work to carry it forward in future legislative sessions. Additionally, I will secure funding for my district in order to provide the resources for our schools to educate children efficiently and effectively.

How would you further ensure that more eligible residents receive SNAP benefits both in district and across the Commonwealth?

If elected, I will strive to strengthen all food assistance programs in order to make it more accessible and more equitable for all. I will support legislation that will work to expand benefits not only in my community of Billerica, but across Massachusetts. It is critical to close the gap between those who are eligible for SNAP benefits and those actually receiving SNAP benefits. Should I be elected I will work to ensure and support the act to create the common application for those seeking nutritional assistance. I will also work to reduce the stigma and reticence to use benefits.

Would you support using additional state resources to supplement SNAP to either expand eligibility, increase benefits amount, or both?

If elected, I will strive to strengthen SNAP in order to make it more accessible and more equitable for all. This includes supporting the use of state resources in order to supplement and expand eligibility and benefits.





**PROJECT
BREAD**

How would you help promote Summer Eats (the Summer Food Service Program) program in your district and across the state?

I would work to ensure both children and parents are aware of the Summer Eats program by promoting this program through schools in my district, as well as through the Billerica Community Farmer's Market I worked to establish. If elected I plan to secure funding to educate children on food literacy, as well as the resources available within our community and commonwealth to aid in the access to nutritional food options throughout the year.

Would you commit to supporting state legislation that ensures free school meals for all students?

Yes - I will also work to ensure that contractors schools hire provide healthy and delicious offerings to all students.

What steps would you take in reducing stigma and increasing accessibility for households of all backgrounds in access federal nutrition programs and other food resources?

Regardless of background or identity, everyone deserves ample and equitable access to federal nutrition programs and resources. I have made healthy food more accessible in my own community by spearheading the effort to make sure that vendors at the Community Farmers Market accept SNAP. Should I be elected, I will continue my endeavors and support of equitable and ample access to resources such as SNAP and the Healthy Incentives Program.

How do you plan to use your platform to dismantle systemic racism and xenophobia, particularly in ways that advance equity in accessing basic needs, employment opportunities, and increase generational wealth?

Addressing systemic oppression is an important part of my platform and my personal values. As a representative, I would work to pass An Act Promoting Equality and Respect in the Legislature, creating an independent commission to investigate sexual harassment and other workplace allegations on Beacon Hill. I





**PROJECT
BREAD**

would take on issues of discriminatory housing practices such as zoning reforms and tenant rights, as well as passing legislation that would work to dismantle the school to prison pipeline to start. I firmly commit to passing legislation and seeking out community aid that directly addresses the needs of our most vulnerable communities, and disavow national movements that seek to harm LGBTQ+ children. As a teacher, I believe that our educators must have full access to accurate and inclusive curriculum and I will fight to make sure our Massachusetts schools continue to improve upon what we teach to our future generations As an educator, I joined GLEJA (Greater Lawrence Educational Justice Alliance) and fought for the Student Opportunity Act so that schools would have funding restored. I have taken bystander training to be a more effective advocate in the moment when it matters most. When I volunteer my time, it is for the local community pantry, teaching young kids to read, or accessing needed benefits.

Can you please share your plans to address other challenges food insecure household may be facing?

Often with food insecurity comes other inequities within a household. Some of my top priorities include: affordable housing, public education funding, improving and expanding healthcare accessibility and affordability, and ensuring equitable access to public resources. If elected, I will close loopholes that serve as barriers for preventative care access, increase funding and accessibility to critical and long-term mental health services, as well as introduce and champion a Medicare for All system in Massachusetts. I will support affordable housing legislation and focus on increasing the amount of aid delegated to our public schools, as well as support Massachusetts' Student Opportunity Act and Universal Pre-K.

How would you ensure new economic opportunities or programs to help your constituents access basic needs, such as housing or food, are equitably delivered to those most in need?

I plan to support and advocate for organizations with programs that focus on the accessibility of nutritional food and housing. If elected, I will be a strong proponent of programs such as the Healthy Incentives Program. A myriad of food





deserts unfortunately plague communities across our state, including my own. Programs like SNAP and HIP are crucial in ensuring the basic need and right to accessing food.

What else would you like to share about your plans to address food insecurity and its root causes?

Climate change is damaging many of our farmers' livelihoods and limiting the amount of food produced for their communities. What results is food insecurity and a plethora of food deserts across our state. If elected, I will sponsor legislation pertaining to protecting our environment and combating climate change. I will also co-sponsor and work to pass the current iteration of the Green New Deal before the Massachusetts Legislature.

If recent years have taught us anything, it was definitely the mainstream nature of how society systematically works against people of color. This can be seen clearly in stakeholders of color. If elected, I will support and vote for S.502/H.860, Additionally I will sponsor any additional legislation that secures funding for our farmers of color to ensure that each of these farmers and stakeholders have equitable treatment and access to opportunity throughout our food system.

Furthermore, I have made healthy food more accessible in my own community by spearheading the effort to make sure that vendors at the Community Farmers Market accept SNAP benefits.

