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: Bruce Chester
Party: Republican
District: 2nd Worcester
Position Sought: State Representative
Website: votebrucechester.com

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?

Many years ago my family and I had to use it. My wife is disabled and my child was under age at the time.

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

My goal is to make sure that government is not wasting taxpayer money on low priority special interest projects and use good fiscal policies to run a tight budget so we can fund programs that affect the community and minimize food insecurity as much as possible.
How would you further ensure that more eligible residents receive SNAP benefits both in district and across the Commonwealth?

I would first evaluate the eligibility guidelines and streamline the government's process on determining who is eligible. I would use a significant amount of technology to weed out those who would take advantage of the SNAP program, while ensuring that government is transparent on what the appropriated funds are spent on and hold leadership accountable.

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

I would have to review those resources so they don't cause an unfair imbalance to those who could otherwise assist in administering the program judiciously.

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

Online as well as wide spread marketing of the program. A doorknocking program deployed in low income communities would be a worthwhile expense. Also using the school system to promote the program various times during the school year regularly would keep it on the minds of kids, parents and teachers.

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

I would have to review the legislation before committing to it. Historically, legislators would hide money for other unrelated projects within important bills so I would need to make sure that the bill is single-minded before I make any commitment.
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?

Arm myself with the facts and promote the idea that we are all Americans and part of what makes this country great is that we must and need to care for each other, regardless of income, beliefs or any other protected status.

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?

I am not sure how this is relevant to hunger. It would take more time and space here to fully process this question.

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

I would have to look at it case by case. I don't think there is a one size fits all answer here.

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?

Focus and assist the small and medium business owners in the area and tailor programs for that community.

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

We need to enable and encourage small, local businesses to get involved while preventing the government from interfering with the local economy. We must encourage faith based organizations to get involved and provide resources for
them as well. The more we give control to the local communities, the more successful these programs will be.