

Johnny Sanchez
Winterport
LD 468

Dear members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservations, and Forestry,

My name is Johnny and I am a resident of Winterport. I'm submitting testimony today as a former farm worker, farmers market shopper, and advocate for food insecure communities. I'd like to express my support for LD 468 -- An act to address food insecurity by helping Maine residents access locally produce food.

I'm currently employed at a nonprofit that builds gardens in food insecure communities to empower folks to grow some of their own food and through conversations with people in those communities, I've learned of the extreme importance of programs like SNAP, WIC, TANF, and senior farm share programs. These programs are, in some cases, the best and/or only opportunities that people have to access fresh, healthy produce. There is a huge body of literature that demonstrates the many of improved health outcomes related to healthier diets. These programs don't just increase people's access to certain types of food but to help their overall health.

In addition to improving the health of Mainers, the funding in this bill would directly impact the local and state economy by incentivizing Mainers to spend their money at farmers markets and therefore directly aiding our food system.

This bill is of the utmost importance and I ask that you support it.

Thank you!