



Testimony of Jessica Fay for
**The Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry**
January 7, 2026
In Support of LD 2040
An Act to Survey Food Insecurity in Maine

Senator Talbot-Ross, Rep. Pluecker and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture Conservation and Forestry,

My name is Jessica Fay and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for the Maine Council on Aging. The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in our communities.

LD 2040 creates a statewide approach to gathering data regarding food insecurity. This data can be used to track and improve programs that provide nutrition to people who are food insecure. According to the [Maine 2025 Healthy Aging Data Report](https://healthyagingdatareports.org/me/me-healthy-aging-data-report/)¹ the statewide average for people over the age of 60 receiving SNAP benefits is 10.85% and in over 50 communities that number is between 16 and 37%. Older adults and older adults in [rural communities](https://healthyagingdatareports.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MEStateMaps/4_Economic/ME_Map40_pctage60fod.pdf)² in particular are at higher risk for food insecurity. There are currently over 900 older adults statewide on waitlists for home delivered meals through the Area Agencies on Aging Meals on Wheels programs due to a lack of funding. The USDA Food Insecurity Survey has been discontinued and this leaves Maine without important data to help us understand trends in hunger. With the passage of this bill the state would have the ability to fill the data gap that the cancellation of the Food Insecurity Survey creates.

These two data points are important but don't give us the full picture of food insecurity in older adults. Many older adults aren't accessing food programs like Meals on Wheels or SNAP benefits even when they are eligible. Reasons for this might include program capacity, stigma, chronic health conditions and access to transportation. Without collecting data, appropriate interventions that address these reasons may be missed.

¹ <https://healthyagingdatareports.org/me/me-healthy-aging-data-report/>

²

https://healthyagingdatareports.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MEStateMaps/4_Economic/ME_Map40_pctage60fod.pdf

Maine should measure and understand both where geographically people are food insecure and also why food insecurity exists. Collection of this data will help target programs in the right areas to the people who need them.

Collecting comprehensive data around hunger will also allow for assessment of whether programs in place are adequate and effective at meeting the needs of the people they are serving. Program evaluation becomes very difficult without an understanding of how people who are utilizing those programs are faring and whether their needs are being met.

Making sure Maine understands the magnitude and reasons for hunger in older people is an important part of reaching the solutions that will ensure our friends and neighbors are healthy and able to live secure and fulfilled lives as we all age in our homes and communities.

LD 2040 provides an appropriate mechanism to collect this critical data and we ask that you pass this Legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you.