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January 14, 2026

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Calvin Schaffer. I am a resident of Cape Elizabeth, a pediatric resident physician based in Portland, and I sit on the Board of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am writing today on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to express our strong support for LD 2051, "An Act to Ensure Access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Maine."

LD 2051 seeks to expand on the definition of "noncitizen legally admitted to the United States" for the purposes of accessing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Maine. It protects access to SNAP for those who lost eligibility as of July 3, 2025 due to the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

In 2023, Maine had a food insecurity rate of 13.8%, the highest in New England. This number was even higher for children – more than 1 in 5 children in Maine live in households that struggle to afford enough to eat. Unfortunately, these figures have continued to rise since 2021 and, without a doubt, will continue to worsen without policies like LD 2051 ensuring access to life-saving programs like SNAP. This policy would also be in line with Maine's existing policy and Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030 and is a necessary protection to prevent hunger in our community.

As a pediatric resident physician, I face the consequences of food insecurity in my patients and families daily, from the negative health effects of lack of access to nutritious foods to the stress that families face when they cannot find enough food for their children to eat. Children who experience food insecurity are more likely to have stunted growth, malnutrition, and are more likely to suffer from chronic health problems including asthma and depression. These children also require extra clinic visits, heightened emergency department use, and are more likely to be hospitalized, putting further strain on children, families, and the healthcare system in Maine as well.

No one should go hungry, and we strongly believe that LD 2051 helps make Maine communities stronger and healthier. Please help feed the children and families of Maine by passing LD 2051.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Calvin Schaffer, MD

Board Member, Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

References:

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- Thomas MMC, Miller DP, Morrissey TW. Food Insecurity and Child Health. Pediatrics. 2019;144(4)doi:10.1542/peds.2019-0397