

Good Afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Talbot Ross, and Representative Pleucker, and members from both Joint Standing Committees.

My name is Elizabeth Alvarez. I am a current resident of Winterport and I am here today to speak in **support of LD 210** and its appropriation to the **FUND TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY/PROVIDE NUTRITION INCENTIVES**.

I am a single mother who struggles to make ends meet. Having the ability to access Farmers Markets with SNAP/EBT dollars has been such a privilege. Having access to locally grown healthy food truly means a great deal to my children and I. Maine Harvest Bucks is an incredible blessing because my money extends further than the typical value it has at big chain grocers. It supports the local economy. It gives me a better opportunity to provide high quality produce to my family. My 8 year old daughter loves to receive Maine Harvest Bucks! It's an early lesson on financial literacy, essentially giving her a budget to manage each time we shop at a farmers market. Having this opportunity is also teaching her about the farm to table process. She gets to communicate with farmers first hand, ask questions, and see the beauty of farmers as hardworking community members. This has been teaching my children what cooperative extension looks like. Showing them how to participate in the environment around them, ways in which to interact with other beings, and how to behave with sustainability in mind. Access to these types of programs is what all children need to be set up for a healthy and successful future. My family needs this. Maine families need this.

I ask for you to please support and protect the appropriation to the **FUND TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY/PROVIDE NUTRITION INCENTIVES**.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Alvarez, Winterport, ME