



Permanent Commission RACIAL, INDIGENOUS & TRIBAL POPULATIONS

LD 468 “An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents
Access Locally Produced Food”

March , 2025

Senator Talbot Ross , Representative Pluecker, and Honorable Members
of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee.

My name is Rae Sage, and I am the Policy Coordinator for the Permanent
Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations.
The Permanent Commission's role is to examine racial disparities across
all systems and advise Maine State Government on ways to improve the
status and outcomes of historically disadvantaged racial, Indigenous, and
tribal populations.

The Policy Committee of the Permanent Commission supports legislation
that expands programs that increase access to food for historically
marginalized communities and LD468 does just that.

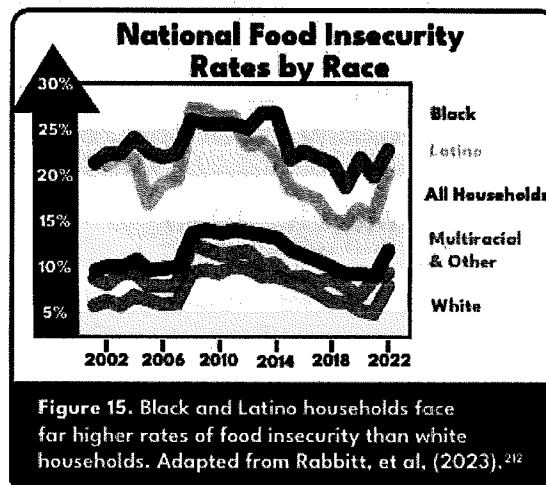
Evident by the outpouring of support last session, this bill provides
ongoing funding for programming that has already proven itself a critical
asset to both farmers and community members alike.

The Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030 report notes that food
insecurity rates are higher in certain communities or among certain
demographics, including African immigrants at 51.6%, single-parent
households at 42%, and people with a disability that prevents them from
working at 39%.¹

The Permanent Commission's State of Racial Disparities Report also notes
that food insecurity in households of color in Maine is 28%, many times

¹ Myall, J. (2019). Issue Brief: Food Insecurity in Maine. Maine Center for Economic Policy.
<https://www.mecep.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/MECEP-Hunger-Issue-Brief-2019.pdf>

the rate of food insecurity rate in white households (13%).² These rates of food insecurity are particularly high among Maine's migrant farmworker populations, where national studies suggest food insecurity ranges from 37% to 64%.^{3 4 5}



As visible in these statistics, food insecurity deeply impacts historically marginalized racial communities. In this, a time of uncertainty in terms of federal funding and ever rising national food prices, it is imperative we broaden the scope of what we can do to assist those already feeling the weight of compounding disparities right here within our state. Everyone deserves access to the nutritious and culturally appropriate foods that fuel a life well lived.

For more information on how food insecurity impacts racial, Indigenous, and tribal populations in Maine please see the Permanent Commission's State of Racial Disparities Report available on our website and in print.

² Myall, J. (2019). Issue Brief: Food Insecurity in Maine. Maine Center for Economic Policy. <https://www.mecep.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/MECEP-Hunger-Issue-Brief-2019.pdf>

³ Mora, A. M., et al. (2022). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on California farmworkers' mental health and food security. *Journal of Agromedicine*. 27(3). 303-314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1059924X.2022.2058664>

⁴ Borre, K., Ertle, L. and Graff, M. (2010). Working to eat: Vulnerability, food insecurity, and obesity among migrant and seasonal farmworker families. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*. 53. 443-462.

⁵ Smith, J. & Cuesta, G. (2018). Hunger in the fields: Food insecurity and food access among farmworker families in Migrant and Seasonal Head Start. *Journal of Latinos and Education*. 19(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2018.1500291>