

PARTNERING TO END HUNGER



**Good Shepherd**

FOOD BANK OF MAINE

January 7, 2026

Good afternoon Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. My name is Amy Sassi and I am the Director of Government Affairs for Good Shepherd Food Bank. I am speaking in support of LD 2040, An Act to Survey Food Insecurity in Maine.

LD 2040 establishes a state-level pilot survey that would provide Maine with timely, accurate, and locally relevant data on food insecurity. This is urgently needed due to a confluence of factors: the elimination of the federal USDA food security survey, current and anticipated changes to state and federal policies affecting SNAP, heating assistance, school meals, housing, and health care, existing data showing rising hunger, and Maine's approaching benchmark toward our collective goal of ending hunger by 2030.

Since 1995, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has collected nationally consistent data on food access, food spending, and use of food assistance through the annual Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.<sup>i</sup> In September 2025, USDA announced it would eliminate this survey. That decision created a significant data gap when policymakers need reliable information to understand the impact of economic and policy changes on households living in poverty.

Since 2011, Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap* study has provided annual national, state, and county-level estimates of food insecurity.<sup>ii</sup> However, the data is not available in real time. For example, the report released in May 2025 relies on 2023 data. While useful for understanding long-term trends, it cannot answer immediate questions, such as how food pantry demand changed when SNAP benefits were interrupted in November 2025, whether pantries saw more repeat visits or new households seeking assistance for the first time, or whether instability in LIHEAP contributed to increased need.

LD 2040 would complement and strengthen this kind of work by creating a consistent, statewide source of timely data that policymakers can use to evaluate programs, respond to emerging needs, and make informed decisions.

We know this committee shares our concern about food insecurity in Maine, and we are encouraged by the broad support for this bill. We respectfully urge you to support LD 2040 and vote "ought to pass."

Thank you for your consideration,  
Amy Sassi

<sup>i</sup> [Food Security in the United States | Economic Research Service](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Hunger & Poverty in the United States | Map the Meal Gap](#)