



**Testimony of Anna Korsen, Full Plates Full Potential
Support for LD 2051 An Act to Ensure Access to the
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I'm Anna Korsen, Deputy Director with Full Plates Full Potential, a statewide non-profit working to address childhood food insecurity in Maine by maximizing access to federally funded USDA nutrition programs like SNAP and school meals. We are a founding member of the Hunger Free Maine Coalition who advocates to advance the priorities of Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger. I also serve as the co-chair of the Ending Hunger in Maine Advisory Committee and Full Plates is a contracted SNAP Outreach organization with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

I am here today in support of LD 2051 An Act to Ensure Access to the Supplemental Nutrition Program. The passage of HR.1 last summer has made historic cuts to the nation's most successful food assistance program, including eliminating eligibility for lawfully present noncitizens. Based on DHHS data, this could terminate federal benefits for roughly 2,000 legally present immigrants residing in Maine. **This bill will clarify Maine's existing state funded SNAP program and send a clear message to DHHS and immigrants in Maine that our state SNAP program will continue to support them.** This federal change is a stark departure from America's long standing, bi-partisan commitment to people fleeing violence and persecution.

Maine, and indeed this committee unanimously, enacted State SNAP for these categories of immigrant statuses in 1997 after similar federal cuts to public benefits. The legislature affirmed that dignity and respect for all residents are Maine values and has since enshrined the right to food in our constitution and established a commitment to Ending Hunger in Maine by 2030.

Maine is leading the nation in feeding kids at school due to our School Meals for all Policy and we applaud the continued investment by the legislature and administration for that investment. However, for too many kids, school breakfast and lunch are the only meals they can count on. To ensure food security for all kids all day every day, **Maine must stay committed to SNAP, and to eliminating childhood hunger.**

In a time marked by fear, federal confusion, and increased challenges for DHHS in administering new rules and attacks on immigrant communities in rhetoric and policy, clarifying and protecting our state SNAP is a small but significant step to protect some of our state's most vulnerable children who experience hunger at the highest rates in a state with the highest childhood food insecurity rate in



New England.¹

Please support LD 2051. Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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¹ <https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov/future/files/2023-06/maines-roadmap-to-end-hunger.pdf>