

OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

To: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
From: Hillary Risler, Esq., Legislative Analyst
Date: March 17, 2021
Subj: **LD 362, “Resolve, To Require the Department of Education To Form a Family Income Data Collection Working Group” (Brennan)**

SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Education to form a working group to explore and recommend changes to how schools collect family income data, including family income data that is collected by schools to secure funding for school nutrition programs but is also used for other programs.

The working group would include one or more representatives from DOE, one representative from DHHS, one representative from MEPRI, one representative from USM’s Food Studies Program, and one representative from DACF’s stakeholder group assembled pursuant to Resolve 2019, chapter 32 (attached). DOE would also be required to invite participation of MSNA, MSMA, a nonprofit association addressing child hunger, a nonprofit addressing overall child welfare, and the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, Northeast Regional office.

The department is directed to submit a report by January 4, 2022 to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, which is authorized to submit legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature.

TESTIMONY

- **Proponents:**

- The current process for the collection of family income data is burdensome on school nutrition directors and cumbersome and confusing for parents and a simpler, more streamlined application process would ultimately allow more children across Maine to receive the food they need
- This data is used for things other than just food programs (for example, the economically disadvantaged component of EPS), and this working group would examine the best and least intrusive way to get the information, especially if the forms relate to the free-and-reduced lunch go away permanently
- This working group would work with DOE to determine a plan that could be proposed to the USDA, with an end goal of a possible pilot project or receipt of a waiver from USDA to begin implementing a better process for collecting this data

- **Opponents:** None

- **Neither For Nor Against:** None

POTENTIAL ISSUES OR TECHNICAL PROBLEMS:

- The Department of Education submitted testimony to the committee with concerns regarding:
 - The short turnaround time for the work group;
 - Whether MEPRI's upcoming economically disadvantaged study could be expanded to include this;
 - Whether the workgroup should include representatives from Maine Revenue Services and the Department of Labor; and
 - A suggestion to include having the resolve identify a new method of measuring child poverty in Maine using indicators that are identifiable, measurable, and available for collection

Joanne Allen, Director, School Finance and Operations, and Walter Beesley, Child Nutrition Director, are available for the work session to answer any questions the committee may have based on these concerns.

PRELIMINARY FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

- Additional costs to the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services to implement the requirements of this legislation can be absorbed within existed budgeted resources.

STATE OF MAINE

 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND NINETEEN

 H.P. 848 - L.D. 1159
Resolve, To End Hunger in Maine by 2030

Preamble. Whereas, the Legislature finds that, for the economic and social well-being of the people of the State, all people must be free from hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition, starvation or endangerment of life from scarcity of or lack of access to nourishing and culturally appropriate food; and

Whereas, the human, social and economic costs of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition to the State are enormous and far reaching, leading to lost productivity, health-related problems, reduced well-being, decreased learning ability, reduced fulfilment of human potential and social and political unrest that undermines development efforts; and

Whereas, one in 4 children in Maine goes to bed hungry every night, 37% of the Maine people who face hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition do not qualify for any public assistance and Maine ranks first in New England and 9th in the nation for food insecurity; and

Whereas, many emergency food relief sites in the State regularly lack fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutrient-dense foods for residents struggling with hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition; and

Whereas, for the consumer, producer and the environment, the cost of food produced by and for the global industrial food system has risen in the last decade; and

Whereas, 90% of the food Maine people consume is imported from elsewhere; and

Whereas, Maine has all the natural resources and hard-working, self-reliant people to grow, catch, harvest and process enough food to reduce imports and provide the people of the State with a diet based more on Maine-produced foods and yet state food policy to date has not significantly reduced hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition for the people of the State; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Plan to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in the State. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, in

consultation and collaboration with interested parties and stakeholders, including, but not limited to, statewide and community-based advocacy and emergency food relief organizations and nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, private foundations, interfaith religious councils, farmers, persons who fish commercially, food producers, state and local granges, civic organizations, regional, local and community food policy councils and people who struggle with hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition, shall collaborate with the Department of Marine Resources, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to eliminate hunger in the State by 2030. The strategic plan designed under this resolve must at least:

1. Use existing programs, staff and resources to the extent possible;
2. Define and articulate the scope of the food and nutrition situation in the State, including accurate data and information related to the contribution of relevant sectors on nutrition, food consumption and production, food distribution systems, household incomes and other relevant demographic data, in order to address the multiple dimensions of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
3. Include any recommendations of legislative commissions, task forces, working groups or studies on ending hunger for any targeted population that will prove effective for the general population;
4. Determine any disproportionate impact of hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition on people living in food deserts across the State and include proposals to close those gaps more quickly as the State moves toward eradicating hunger;
5. Determine the barriers to access to healthy and culturally appropriate food and include proposals to eliminate those barriers for persons who struggle with intergenerational hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition and for persons who struggle with intermittent hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition;
6. Balance supply-side policies and solutions such as increasing agricultural productivity and accessing markets, investing in family farms, small-scale fisheries and forestry and fostering governance of land tenure and natural resources with policies and solutions that promote food self-sufficiency, including hunting, foraging and the policies outlined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, section 219;
7. Establish benchmarks and measurable outcomes based on sound evidence and analysis to monitor progress, assess impacts and interpret outcomes in order to ensure that actions bring the State closer to eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by 2030; and
8. Identify and propose adequate resource allocation in order to translate policies, programs and legislation into concrete action.

Sec. 2. Initial design commencement. Resolved: That, no later than 30 days after the effective date of this resolve, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall begin inviting interested parties, stakeholders and the departments outlined under section 1 to convene the first planning session.

Sec. 3. Initial design report. Resolved: That, by February 10, 2020, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry detailing the initial design for the plan under section 1. The committee is authorized to submit legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature.



STATE OF MAINE
129th LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

Report as requested
LD 1159 – Resolve to End Hunger in Maine by 2030

Respectfully Submitted
February 10, 2020

Advisory Group Members:

Amanda Beal	Commissioner, Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry
Walter Beesley	Child Nutrition Director, Maine Department of Education
Kevin Concannon	Advisor on Food and Nutrition Programs
Patricia Dushuttle	Special Projects Manager, Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Kate Freedman	Food Programs Director, Healthy Acadia
Scott Hamann	Case Manager, Knox County Homeless Coalition
James Hanna	Executive Director, Cumberland County Food Security Council
Rep. Craig Hickman	House Representative & Co-Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (LD 1159 Sponsor)
Emily Horton	Director of Policy & Community Engagement, Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry
Kathy Kilrain del Rio	Director of Campaigns and Healthcare Advocacy, Maine Equal Justice
Craig Lapine	Food Security Advocate
Kristen Miale	President, Good Shepherd Food Bank
Jo Morrissey	Program Manager, Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment
Donna Murray	Program Manager, Maine Senior FarmShare Program, Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry
Theresa Oleksiw	Food Security Advocate
Ginger Roberts-Scott	Director, Maine WIC Nutrition Program, Department of Health and Human Services
Sherri Stevens	Community Relations Manager, Hannaford Supermarkets
Dawud Ummah	Food Security Advocate
Frank Wertheim	Extension Educator, Agriculture/Horticulture, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

Project Lead & Other Resources:

Penelope Jordan	Project Lead, Maine Department Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Eric Day	Student Intern, University of Southern Maine Food Studies Program
Amy Carrington	Program Specialist, University of Southern Maine Food Studies Program

