



**Massachusetts Food System Collaborative
2022 State Representative and Senator Questionnaire**

Your name: Smitty Pignatelli

Office Sought, including district: State Representative, 3rd Berkshire District

Website:

What are three of your priorities that reflect your commitment to a healthy food system for Massachusetts and your constituents?

Priority 1

Addressing the root cause of food insecurity, particularly in rural areas.

Priority 2

Increasing access to healthy foods for students.

Priority 3

Implementing a Farm to School Meals Program.

How would you support the Healthy Incentives Program?

By working with educators and community partners, increasing access to information for families about HIP in my district is critical. I believe our schools play an essential role in not only providing healthy food options, but helping students understand what healthy eating entails. I believe that our office can serve as a resource in helping provide information and helping families understand if they are eligible/how they can use the program.

How would you support farmers in adapting to climate change?

Particularly in my district, I would help facilitate increased communication and collaboration between state agencies like DAR and EoEEA and local farmers. Helping them stay up to date with regional climate trends, offering opportunities for roundtable discussion and grant applications, as well as serving as sounding board for shared service opportunities among farmers to pool resources and help them sustain their livelihoods.

How would you help to ensure that children understand where food comes from, the importance of healthy eating, and other essential food literacy issues?

Similar to the HIP, I believe that our office can serve as a link in helping provide information to students and families about sustainable food systems and food literacy. As the lead filer of the Farm to School meals program in the House, I have formed great relationship with school program directors who seek to increased education around healthy eating. These partnerships and a displayed commitment to this advocacy is critically important.

What policies or investments would you support to protect farmland and increase farmland access?

I would support policies that remove inequalities for land ownership and access and eliminate barriers to entry; assist with farmland transition efforts and secure land tenure for farmers, protecting them from large-scale producers.

What strategies would you support to reduce food waste?

Increase community awareness about composting accessibility and work with local schools and business to evaluate their existing food waste prevention plans/work with experts to help develop plans if they do not currently exist.

How would you work to ensure that food system stakeholders of color - consumers, workers, farmers, landowners, and others - have equitable access to opportunities in all aspects of the food system?

Eliminating barriers to purchasing land for stakeholders of color -- as well as women and members of the LGBTQ+ community -- is critical so that they can access all opportunities in the food system. It is also important to create space for stakeholder conversations where these groups invited to the table, heard from and their experiences are translated into targeted policy initiatives.