Massachusetts Food System Collaborative
2022 State Representative and Senator Questionnaire

Your name: Marcus Vaughn

Office Sought, including district: State Representative, 9th Norfolk district

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What are three of your priorities that reflect your commitment to a healthy food system for Massachusetts and your constituents?
Priority 1
Supporting equitable community health and food access.

Priority 2
Preserving local agricultural farms while encouraging urban agriculture.

Priority 3
Growing food business opportunities in local communities across MA.

How would you support the Healthy Incentives Program?
I would support and promote localities to participate in local farmers' markets, mobile markets, farm stands or Community Supported Agriculture farm share programs.

How would you support farmers in adapting to climate change?
I would support funding and efforts of feasibility studies to bring in local scientist to help identify how they can better operate their farms for the future in such changing climates.

How would you help to ensure that children understand where food comes from, the importance of healthy eating, and other essential food literacy issues?
I would promote local programs at schools and town community gardens to help start a community garden. This is a great way to teach children where food comes from. Planting a seed, taking care of it as it grows, and ultimately harvesting and eating it helps children realize food doesn't just come from the store.

I would like to have community partnerships with local farms so kids can visit and learn the importance of agriculture to our local community and economy.

What policies or investments would you support to protect farmland and increase farmland access?
I would push to use local produce for community events and meals while also encouraging or setting policy for local schools to purchase local foods from local farms. I would also like to make sure our local land trust includes farmland in its land protection priorities.

What strategies would you support to reduce food waste?
Donate excess food to local animal farms specifically pig farms. Support towns in an effort to reduce disposables.Support local awareness campaigns in order to reveal how much food people actually waste and provide simple solutions for cutting down on that waste. For example, bring in local grocers to help print storage tips in stores for fruits and vegetables. Initiatives such as cooking classes and information displays sponsored by local governments and community groups can also provide constituents with information that helps reduce waste.

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?
Dismantling racial barriers and ensuring that everyone can participate and reach their full potential are critical for Massachusetts prosperity. Fair inclusion of all Baystaters is essential to growing a strong economy and building vibrant and resilient communities.Low-income communities and communities of color in MA often lack grocery stores or other fresh food markets along with the jobs and economic opportunities these businesses bring to neighborhoods. An equitable food system would produce different outcomes by
making healthy food available to all, providing good jobs, and fostering healthy neighborhoods. This would help strengthen the economy by bolstering incomes, spurring business development, and contributing to equitable economic development in segregated and long-distressed neighborhoods.
With the right hiring and training practices, food businesses can deliver good jobs to vulnerable populations and underinvested neighborhoods. Providing support to entrepreneurs who are people of color, women, immigrants, and low-income and removing barriers like lack of access to credit, networks, and information can grow new businesses and expand existing ones. Lastly, food markets can revitalize distressed neighborhoods by generating foot traffic, attracting additional businesses, boosting local spending, and generating local tax revenue.