



**Massachusetts Food System Collaborative
2024 State Representative and Senator Questionnaire**

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Office Sought, including district: State Representative, 1st Plymouth

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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

Education: I think it is important that we invest in the education of the children in the Commonwealth to ensure they know where our food comes, how they can be involved (through programs like 4H), know about the jobs in the industry, and understand food as fueling ones body. The Plymouth Public Schools has had great success with our partnership with the community that allows us to have gardens at our schools and a new position of a dietitian who is working with students to introduce them to new foods and different ways to prepare the foods. The hope is to diversify the food options for our students over the long run. I think public private partnerships are very beneficial in this area. We also need to do better by our students in the quality of food that is offered at our schools (in respect to a balance meal). School lunches might be free now but they should also meet certain standards.

Priority 2

The development of a Workforce plan to ensure that good paying jobs are available. This means investing in educating and developing pipelines for those who are interested in the field. We also need to ensure that as the pipeline is being developed that those in charge do not lose sight of the face that the industry needs to also look at diversification and at its growth with an eye to racial equity. In order to focus on the industry and recruit people the industry also has to be able to pay a livable wage which is another problem to solve considering the ROI in this industry.

Priority 3

Food Security is of utmost importance to ensure everyone has access to nutritious food. It is important that the Healthy Incentives Program be fully funded and barriers to access SNAP are minimized. As mentioned early it is important that the Free School Lunch programs continue to make sure students have access to meals during the day. Making sure everyone has access to food is critical to the success of our population.



How would you support the Healthy Incentives Program?

It is important that this remains fully funded as this program encourages good nutrition while helping local producers. I would support this bill, work to learn more about HIP, and advocate on behalf of the funding for this important program to continue. I have seen first hand working at Massasoit Community College the benefits of this program.

How would you support the food system in mitigating the effects of and adapting to climate change?

I believe every vote that is taken we need to think about how it impacts climate change because almost everything impacts our climate in one way or another. It is important that questions are asked to understand how the many things that are outlined in the Climate Survey.

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

I would support legislation like An Act Promoting Equity in Agriculture as I believe it is important to have discussions and understand the barriers and other issues in order to determine issues that keep people out of being part of the industry. It is important that we have equity.

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 be a partner in advocating for this as educating our student on nutritious food. I fully believe in teaching traditional subjects but it is critical that we go beyond that and work to educate our students about SEL, finances, and of course healthy eating/food literacy. I advocated for years on the Plymouth School Committee to improve our Elementary Health Curriculum and now Massachusetts has new Health Education standards and I believe that this is an important part of that education. Having an understanding of healthy food and where your food comes from is important.

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

This is an area that I would need to learn more about to fully know the approach that I would take in protecting farmland and increasing access but I love the idea of looking at ways to bring in the historically underserved communities, understanding what success is, and developing a plan for the Commonwealth in terms of farmland.



What strategies would you support to reduce food waste?

I would need to learn more about this but from the resources provided it appears that the 1st Plymouth district does not have any organizations that are working to reduce food waste. I know I have tried several times to get the Plymouth Schools to think about how we can combat this even discussing possible composting but the district had a bad experience years back. Continuing to fund grants that look at creative ways to combat this issue.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

I am always looking to learn more and to have conversations on any topic. Thank you!