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**Testimony in support of H-7400**

March 5, 2024

Honorable Chairman Abney and members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am the founder and president of Eat Drink RI, one of the top media and marketing companies in the region for all things culinary and I **strongly support H-7400**.

Every year the RI Community Food Bank releases an annual status report on hunger, and every year it's shocking to see the number of children in Rhode Island who go hungry. One out of every five children in our state are food insecure. Among the many health problems that result from hunger, a lack of focus and comprehension can be hugely detrimental to a child's future.

It's extremely difficult for anyone to focus and learn when their bellies are empty, and worse, when they're thinking about how to get their next meal, or if there even is one. Teachers have reported discipline issues are higher with food insecure children, and studies have shown that students who've had a good breakfast and lunch are less disruptive and have a better school day experience for themselves and their classmates.

Respectfully, I urge you to pass H-7400 forward to the full House for passage this session. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Dadekian