



WEST END COMMUNITY CENTER

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Dear House Finance Committee,

My name is Jack Lenz. I am the Development Associate at the West End Community Center in Providence RI. I am writing to you today in support of Bill HB742. Families come to our Food Pantry because they are deeply in need of food assistance. Many of the parents who visit our pantry are waiting in line with their young children to receive the necessary culturally relevant food they require to properly feed their families. In addition to my work in Social Services at the Food Pantry I also work in the after-school program. Every day I ride along on the van picking up all the children from the various schools we serve. One of the rules is that there is no eating while in the van. The kids we pick up can hardly wait until they get back to the center to dig into the last of the snacks they have saved. They also devour all the snacks we serve them as soon as they get to the center. Healthy School Meals for All is of the utmost importance with so many RI Households currently experiencing food and nutrition insecurity. I understand that the budget is tight but caring for our children's basic needs is an essential investment in our children's futures. I sincerely hope everyone will consider the needs of children and families in Rhode Island and the benefits that Healthy School Meals for All Initiative offers.

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together