

Testimony in Support of HJR-7259
Joint Resolution Making an Appropriation of \$3,000,000 to the Rhode
Island Food Bank
House Committee on Finance
May 14, 2026
Kavya Gopinath, Policy Analyst, Economic Progress Institute

The Economic Progress Institute strongly supports Representative Slater’s HJR-7259, which would authorize the appropriation of the sum of \$3,000,000 to the Rhode Island Food Bank. Rhode Island’s affordability crisis combined with H.R.1’s cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are limiting access to food for too many Rhode Islanders.

All Rhode Islanders deserve access to nutritional food. With the rising cost of housing, gas, healthcare, and most basic goods and services, households have been increasingly struggling to put food on the table. In the Northeast Region, food prices rose by 3.7% in the last year, and Rhode Islanders are really feeling the impact of this.¹ According to the annual RI Life Index survey, 44% of respondents said they experienced some level of household food insecurity in the last year.² According to research by the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, 38% of Rhode Island households were food insecure in 2025, and rates were higher among households of color. Forty seven percent of Black households and 55% of Latino households experienced food insecurity last year.³

H.R.1 will also impact thousands of Rhode Islanders’ access to SNAP due to eligibility and work requirement changes. About 14,000 Rhode Islanders are at risk of losing some food assistance, and approximately 2,300 Rhode Islanders will completely lose access to SNAP. Refugees, asylum seekers, victims of abuse, and other non-citizens are at the highest risk of losing access to SNAP. Adults with children over 14 years of age, homeless individuals, veterans, and foster care adults under the age of 24 are also at a high risk of losing access to SNAP benefits because of new work requirements.⁴

We believe that a more effective and sustainable solution would be to fill the gaps in SNAP that H.R.1 has created and reverse the harmful changes to work requirements. However, in the meantime, thousands of Rhode Islanders need access to food. A \$3,000,000 appropriation to the RI food bank would make a meaningful impact in the lives of many Rhode Islanders who are

¹ [Consumer Price Index, Northeast Region \(February 2026\) - US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

² [Rhode Islanders Report Challenges With Cost of Living, Access to Affordable Housing, and Nutritious Food – News from Brown \(February, 2026\)](#)

³ [Assessing Hunger in Rhode Island: 2025 Updates and the Rhode Island Community Food Bank’s Spring Initiatives](#)

⁴ [Economic Progress Institute – How H.R.1 Will Impact Rhode Islanders](#)

struggling to meet their basic needs. **The Economic Progress Institute strongly supports HJR-7259.**