



Alimente

Jason Kashdan, MS, RD

401-241-6431 Jason@AlimenteRI.com 376 Broadway Unit 2, Providence, RI 02909

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TO: Senate Finance Committee

Chair DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Committee

SUBJECT: SUPPORT (S2238) - AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- PERSONAL INCOME TAX

My name is Jason Kashdan. I'm a registered dietitian and the founder of Alimente, an equity-focused nutrition and food policy strategy practice in Providence. I'm also a Ward 3 City Council candidate. I'm writing in strong support of Senate Bill No. 2238: An Act Relating to Taxation — Personal Income Tax.

This proposal would add an additional 3% surtax on taxable income above \$640,000 and is estimated to generate over \$200 million in revenue for the state. We can use this to make up for healthcare and nutrition security funding we've lost because of the federal H.R. 1 bill.

I chose to move to Rhode Island after earning my Master's degree at Tufts University to complete my dietetic courses at URI. Today, my nutrition counseling approach is grounded in structural determinants of health. I see firsthand the profound impact that access to nutritious food has on health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations.

Nutrition programs prevent diet-related chronic disease and improve food insecurity. Despite their critical role in supporting public health, these programs are weakening. H.R. 1 cuts have removed vital federal support for Rhode Islanders' basic needs, including reducing SNAP benefits that make sure all Rhode Islanders can access healthy food.

The cuts are expected to strip 30,000 Rhode Islanders from Medicaid, 2,300 households from SNAP, and 13,000 individuals from coverage through RI health exchange. In addition, the new work requirements are projected to remove 24,000 individuals off Medicaid and 9,000 households from SNAP.

As a food policy strategist, I've worked most directly to fight for healthy school meals for all. I authored a paper detailing how we could fund a holistic [free breakfast and lunch program for kids across Rhode Island](#). Universal free meals at school lower obesity, lower suspensions, and improve learning.

In addition, if SNAP funding is not stabilized, we will be on the precipice of a years-long eligibility avalanche and nutrition-related healthcare crisis. Reduced SNAP and Medicaid participation cascades into district-wide ineligibility for free meals through the Community Eligibility Provision and subsequently a significant loss of revenue for local farmers and fishermen.

The change in S2238 will only impact the top one percent in income of personal income tax filers. We cannot pass on this opportunity to sustainably generate much-needed revenue for our state. Otherwise, we'll just pay more later: in lost productivity from poor educational outcomes and in healthcare for people who are sicker because they can't access healthy food or preventative medicine. I urge you to support S2238.

Sincerely,

Jason Kashdan, MS, RD