



# The City of Worcester

## Joseph M. Petty

Mayor of the City of Worcester

March 13, 2025

### City Hall Room 305

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U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren  
U.S. Representative Katherine Clark  
U.S. Representative James McGovern  
U.S. Representative William Keating  
U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley  
U.S. Representative Jake Auchincloss

U.S. Senator Edward Markey  
U.S. Representative Richard Neal  
U.S. Representative Stephen Lynch  
U.S. Representative Lori Trahan  
U.S. Representative Seth Moulton

Dear Members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of mayors and city officials across Massachusetts, we thank you for your leadership in representing the needs of our communities. We are writing to express our deep concern over proposed cuts and restrictions to critical safety-net programs, particularly the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These changes would significantly harm the health and well-being of our nation's most vulnerable—low-income households, older adults, children, and people with disabilities.

In Massachusetts, one in six residents relies on SNAP, and 85% of those recipients are older adults, individuals with disabilities, and children. For families with inconsistent wages, SNAP provides access to food so that a family's income can cover basic needs like rent, utilities, childcare, and healthcare.

As elected officials on the front lines, our lowest income constituents rely on a combination of federal, state, and local resources to meet their basic needs. Cuts to SNAP and other nutrition programs would disrupt this delicate balance, placing a significant strain on our cities and communities. Federal nutrition benefits also provide direct economic development opportunities to our local economies, with benefits spent in small, locally owned grocery stores and farmers markets. Any reductions would hurt not only families but also the 5,500 approved EBT grocers, their employees, and local taxes.

In March 2023, the end of pandemic-related extra SNAP benefits resulted in a loss of millions in federal funding for our cities, while food costs have continued to rise. Many families are still struggling, with some now seeing their benefits cover only two weeks of food expenses. As a result, our food pantries are overwhelmed, and the state's food banks are serving 50% more people than before the pandemic. While we are committed to helping, we cannot fully bridge the gap left by these proposed cuts.

Despite the valuable work done by Massachusetts food banks, emergency food simply is not enough. Food banks and food pantries report a significant decline in both donated food as well as fiscal constraints in purchasing wholesale food due to food inflation. For every meal provided by a food bank, SNAP benefits provide nine. With the rising costs of food, housing, and childcare, any further reductions in residents' budgets will have a detrimental impact on their ability to make ends meet.

We urge the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation to work together and across party lines to protect SNAP and other federal nutrition programs from harmful cuts and policy changes. These programs are essential for the health and prosperity of our communities, and as local leaders, we are directly accountable to the residents we serve. Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to protecting the well-being of all residents.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Petty, Mayor of Worcester