



October 14, 2021

The Hon. Anne M. Gobi, Chair  
The Hon. David M. Rogers, Chair  
Joint Committee on Higher Education  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: Testimony in support of S.822/H.1368, “An Act establishing the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Initiative”**

Dear Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of One Family, Inc. in support of **S.822/H.1368, “An Act establishing the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Initiative”**

**One Family, Inc. – organizational overview**

One Family is a Massachusetts nonprofit that prevents family homelessness by helping low-income parents achieve higher education and career success. Our approach to homelessness prevention combines direct-service programs, training and technical assistance, and public policy advocacy.

Through our longest-running direct-service initiative, the One Family Scholars program, each year we help up to 100 low-income single parents pursue college degrees, so they can build family-sustaining careers, and put a roof over their families’ heads. We do this through individualized coaching, scholarships, and flexible stipends.

And over the past four years, through the Credential to Career Coaching (C2C) program, we’ve also helped over 160 more low-income parents identify family-sustaining careers that match their skills and interests and will support housing stability, and then create individualized plans to enter those careers, including a roadmap to earning any necessary degrees, certificates or other credentials.

**Hunger among student-parents in college**

Widespread hunger among Massachusetts college students is well-documented. In 2019 The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University conducted a survey of 9,978 students attending colleges and universities in the Massachusetts public higher education system. Of those students, 37% experienced food insecurity in the prior 30 days. One in four students reported going hungry because they didn’t have enough money for food, and nearly one in three (32%) reported skipping meals or eating smaller meals because they couldn’t afford all the food they need.<sup>1</sup>

**Hunger is particularly prevalent among student-parents – *who represent a quarter of all U.S. college students*<sup>2</sup> – and their children. A Hope Center survey of nearly 200,000 students across the U.S. conducted during the current COVID-19 pandemic found that about half (47%) of all college students with children were experiencing food insecurity.<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University, “2019 #Realcollege Survey Results – Report for Massachusetts Public Higher Education System” (2020), accessed at <https://www.mass.edu/strategic/documents/2019%20HOPE%20Center%20MA%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Fact Sheet #C424, “4.8 Million College Students are Raising Children” (2014), accessed at [https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/C424\\_Student-Parents\\_final-1.pdf](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/C424_Student-Parents_final-1.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Testimony of Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Rules (9/8/2021), accessed at <https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/House-Rules-Testimony-Goldrick-Rab.pdf>.

Take, for example, Valerie, a One Family Scholar and single parent of one child, who earned her associate degree at Middlesex Community College, and is working towards her bachelor's degree in Social Work at Salem State University:

*"When I was a student at Middlesex Community College, my son and I experienced food insecurity from time to time. MCC did have a food pantry, but I didn't know how to cook the foods they had and make good meals, so I didn't get food from the pantry too often. Being a mother who wasn't always able to put enough food on the table for my son and myself took a toll on both of us. It was hard to focus on schoolwork when I didn't know where our next meal was coming from. If MCC had food supports for my son and me above and beyond a food pantry, it would have made a huge difference in our lives, and I would have been able to focus more on my schoolwork and earning my associate degree."*

Or take Wynne, a graduate of Lesley University and the One Family Scholars program who is currently enrolled in the Applied Behavioral Analysis Master's degree program at Endicott College. Wynne reports that the only reason why she and her son didn't go hungry while she was at Lesley University is because her son has a disability, and their social worker told her about SNAP and WIC and helped her apply. Struggling student-parents who don't have a guide who can point the way to accessing food support are often unable to put enough food on the table for their children and themselves.

### **The legislation**

S.822/H.1368 would establish the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Initiative, which would support efforts to end hunger among college students in Massachusetts. **One Family urges the Committee to report this legislation favorably, and to strengthen it by adding language to the effect that, in order to be designated a hunger-free campus, a college must take into consideration the particular needs of student-parents and their children in designing and implementing measures to eliminate hunger.**

Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for S.822/H.1368, "An Act establishing the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Initiative."

Sincerely,



Valerie Paric  
Executive Director