

TESTIMONY

Presented by

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On

**Food Equity in New York City
New York City Council's Committees on Economic Development, General Welfare, and Education
September 18, 2019**

before the

New York City Council

Committees on Economic Development, General Welfare, and Education

on

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at

Council Chambers, City Hall

New York, NY 10007

Introduction

Good afternoon Chairpersons Vallone, Levin, and Treyger, and members of the Committees on Economic Development, General Welfare, and Education. My name is Dr. Erin McDonald, and I am the Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer for Human Services in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, and I am also representing the Mayor's Office of Food Policy. I am joined at the table by Kim Kessler, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. I am also joined today by representatives from DOE, HRA, EDC, Parks, DEP, DSNY, DFTA, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability; the number of agencies here today demonstrates the complexity of the issue of food equity and the resources the City is harnessing to holistically address this expanding and interconnected issue. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Administration's commitment to increase access to nutritious and affordable food throughout the City.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Speaker Johnson for his leadership on this vital issue and the valuable thinking presented in the Council's Growing Food Equity Report. I appreciate the Council's efforts to improve access to healthy food for all New York City communities and to underscore the connection of food to our broader food production system and the environment. We appreciate your acknowledging, through the report and the proposed bills, the value in expanding a number of the City's food equity programs and policies.

Food equity is critical to making New York the Fairest Big City in the nation. During my testimony, I will begin by framing the importance of food equity in New York, then highlight critical initiatives that this Administration, with support from Council, has already set into motion, as well as review the bills that Council is hearing today.

Importance of Food Equity in New York City

Access to food is a fundamental human right and it is our responsibility as a city to ensure that all residents have the ability and opportunity to access nutritious, affordable food through the systems and resources we deliver. While many factors – including national and even international dynamics – affect our local food system, we are committed at the local level to helping all New Yorkers to take full advantage of food that promotes sustenance, health, and economic stability.

We recognize that food inequity is symptomatic of the ever-increasing cost of living in New York City. As housing, food, and transportation costs rise, it is difficult for low-income New Yorkers to feed themselves and their families. Over 1.2 million New Yorkers are food insecure. This number has continued to decline since 2013 (1,360,740 to 1,215,440 from 2013-2016), however 18 percent of all children, almost 9 percent of working adults, and almost 11 percent of seniors remain food insecure. Moreover, we know that further disparities exist when we consider race and ethnicity as more than twice as many Black and Latino New Yorkers report eating no fruits or vegetables in the past day compared to White New Yorkers.

Nutritious food is also often more expensive and concentrated in higher-income neighborhoods. Not only do these circumstances often result in food inequity, but they can also

have drastic effects on health and productivity. There is mounting scientific evidence that health outcomes are directly tied to access to adequate nutritious food.

Highlighting the Administration's Commitment to Food Equity

The Administration understands the gravity of the statistics and the real New Yorkers behind these numbers. This is why we have spearheaded a comprehensive approach to addressing food inequity in New York City, emphasizing and prioritizing the needs of our most vulnerable residents. Today, New York City is a national leader in developing and implementing strategies to promote healthier diets, including programming to promote fruits and vegetable access across multiple settings, and to expand the reuse of food. I will highlight a few investments that demonstrate our commitment to an equitable food system.

An equitable food system develops rigorous standards for guiding food service practice and accountability across City agencies. New York City was the first major city in the country to set nutrition standards for all foods purchased or served by the City. The **Food Standards** were created with the goal of improving the health of all New Yorkers served by City agencies by decreasing the risk of chronic disease related to poor nutritional intake. The standards have been strengthened through investments by this administration and today, the standards apply to the approximately 238 million meals and snacks per year that are served in places such as schools, senior centers, homeless shelters, child care centers, after school programs, correctional facilities, public hospitals and parks.

Promoting access to healthy food options in an equitable food system is an important role for government. With support from City Council as well as city agencies over many years, in conjunction with farmer's market operators, farmers markets have expanded in New York City, and we now have over 130 markets. NYC's **Health Bucks program** provides \$2 coupons that can be used to purchase produce at farmers markets. It is the largest city-run farmers' market incentive program in the nation and in a CDC-funded program evaluation, over 70 percent of Health Bucks users reported that they buy more at farmers markets because of Health Bucks. In 2017 alone, over 515,000 Health Bucks equaling more than \$1,030,000 in fruits and vegetables were distributed, putting fresh, locally-grown produce into the hands of thousands of low-income New Yorkers.

Insufficient money to make ends meet is an underlying root cause of food inequity. The City has made important strides over the last six years to address income inequality through benefits access in dignified ways. One key focus has been increasing access to benefits ensuring they are client-centered and provide maximum economic resources. HRA is actively continuing their efforts to enroll low-income New Yorkers by reaching out to New York City's universe of direct service providers to familiarize them with the user-friendly features of ACCESS HRA, and develop partnerships with many sites that utilize the ACCESS HRA Provider Portal – an online tool designed for CBOs to connect with the clients they serve. Introducing more client-friendly technology solutions, speaks to our value of ensuring low-income New Yorkers are able to receive critical benefits while meeting them where they are. The investment has demonstrated

significant results that reflect a changed client experience. For example, the percent of SNAP applications submitted online increased from 23 percent in 2013 to 87 percent in 2018 and the percent of SNAP application interviews conducted by phone increased from 29 percent in 2013 to 93 percent in 2018.

We need to develop a food system that maximizes food as a resource for humans, and after it becomes waste, as compost for healthy soils. Our goal to send zero waste to landfills is an essential element of creating a circular food economy. Diverting organic material from the landfill is essential to cutting greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector, and allows the city to produce and distribute compost for urban gardens and parks and regional farmland resilience.

Discussion of Proposed Food Bills

While we continue to invest significant effort to improve our food system, more can always be done and we applaud the Council for drawing attention to efforts that will spur greater food equity.

The three bills regarding food governance demonstrate the important role of food policy to the City and the convening power to bring stakeholders together to build a unified approach.

- Intro 1666, from Council Member Kallos, amends the **New York City Charter, to establish an Office of Food Policy.** The Administration has a long-standing commitment to the existing Mayor's Office of Food Policy, created through Executive Order 122 established in 2008. Incorporating the Office into the City Charter further elevates the importance of the issue and work currently underway. We support the bill and look forward to discussing the details with Council.
- Intro 1664, by Council Member Gibson, requires the **Office of Food Policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan.** We support the bill and currently have work in progress to format a plan guided by an equity framework that considers the many dimensions of achieving food equity through partnership, bold ideas, and innovation. We look forward to collaborating with the Council on the bill.
- Intro 1680, by Council Member Vallone, requires an **expansion of the Food Metrics Report.** The current report provides a strong overview of the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food provided by City agencies to the communities we serve. We agree that there is an opportunity to expand on the data included and analysis and support the bill.

On the issue of hunger, two bills speak to expanding the valuable ongoing efforts across the City to ensure vulnerable populations have access to information and resources that support healthy food consumption.

- Intro 1659, by Council Member Chin, directs the City to **identify and enroll seniors eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance benefits**. The City is proud of our work to ensure vulnerable seniors are connected to benefits. SNAP-eligible seniors participate in SNAP at a far higher rate in New York City as compared to the nation as a whole. HRA currently has a senior participation rate of close to 73 percent (an increase from 70.9 percent in 2016), compared to the 45 percent national rate released by USDA. While we share the Council's intention to continue to increase SNAP enrollment among seniors, we have facilitated strong senior enrollment under the City's current strategies and believe the intent of the bill may be achieved through other outreach channels. We look forward to partnering with Council to discuss the details and implications of federal policies on senior SNAP eligibility.
- Intro 1650, by Council Member Adams, asks the City to **provide additional information about the Health Bucks program to social service recipients**. We support the intent of this legislation and look forward to working with the sponsor to ensure the most effective means to share information about the Health Bucks program and farmers markets with applicants and recipients of SNAP benefits. We welcome the opportunity to build upon the strong track record and commend Council Members who have met constituent demand by purchasing Health-Bucks for their districts.

I would like to pause and highlight an important federal rule change that will have significant impact on the two food access bills discussed. Earlier this year, the United States Department of Agriculture issued a proposed rule for broad-based categorical eligibility, "Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)".

The Proposed Rule would dramatically change the longstanding rules for SNAP eligibility in such a way that will increase food insecurity for working-class families and vulnerable populations and negatively impact public health while imposing additional administrative and fiscal burdens on state and local governments. The proposed changes would eliminate current state flexibility. The Administration will be submitting comments strongly objecting to this proposed rule. Comments from any party wishing to submit are due Sept. 23 <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2019-15670>.

To continue to improve access to healthy food among New York City's youngest residents, two bills are proposed to enhance resources that support children to thrive.

- Intro 1675, by Council Member Rose, requires the City to **take additional steps to distribute information regarding summer meals**. The City and Department of Education DOE support this bill, but we have concerns about effectively operationalizing the proposal. DOE supports sending home information in children's backpacks, email or robocalls.
- Intro 1676, from Council Member Rosenthal, requires the City to **report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service**. The DOE is currently piloting

scratch-cooked foods in five schools, and this year will expand the pilot to two additional schools. DOE looks forward to sharing the pilot findings with the Council at the end of the end of the school year. While the City supports the intent of the bill, **large-scale expansion of scratch cooking would require a significant capital investment.**

Access to healthy food across the City agencies is a foundational element to the City's current food policy priorities.

- Intro 1660, from Council Member Cohen, would require the City to **create a "Good Food Purchasing" program.** The City appreciates the intent of the bill and that the Council is aware of the significant efforts already underway by numerous City agencies to implement Good Food Purchasing. We believe that the work currently underway represents a strong approach that supports agencies' efforts to integrate good food purchasing programs on a long-term basis. However, we have concerns regarding the details about the appropriate role of the Good Food Purchasing Advisory Board and look forward to discussions with the Council about how to clarify and refine that role.
- Intro 1654, by Council Member Ayala, would require the Health Department to **develop a neighborhood-specific awareness campaign regarding farm-to-city projects available throughout all five boroughs.** The City supports this bill, as we agree that it is important and useful to make localized information on farm-to-city projects available to New Yorkers. We welcome the opportunity to build upon our existing actions and further expand the use of farmers markets and other local food resources.

On the issue of urban agriculture, three bills speak to expanding the City resources that direct solutions for urban agriculture and understanding the use of community garden spaces.

- Intro 1663 by Council Member Espinal requires **the establishment of an office of urban agriculture and an urban agriculture advisory board.** We support efforts to coordinate, plan, and to tap into the expertise of the urban agriculture community through an advisory board. However, we believe the work can be accommodated in the existing portfolio of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and recommend against creating a separate and specific office.
- Intro 1652, from Council Member Ampry-Samuel, would require the Department of City Planning (DCP) to **categorize city-owned community gardens as open space in the Primary Land Use Tax Lot Output** data set. We support the goal of the bill and share Council's desire to provide more information to the community, though we do have some practical considerations about data infrastructure and integration, and any changes will thus take some time to implement.
- Intro 1653, by Council Member Ampry-Samuel, would require the Parks Department to **collect and report data** regarding community gardens and permitting the **operation of farmers markets and sale of produce** within community gardens. While food production in community gardens is important, it is just one of multiple potential benefits our spaces

provide. We trust our GreenThumb gardeners to know what's best for their communities. We are concerned about the unintended consequences of introducing large-scale commercial food sales at community gardens.

Finally, Intros 1673 and 1681 would require covered city agencies, and the Department of Education, to **submit food waste reduction plans and school food waste prevention plans**, respectively, to the Department of Sanitation for review. Efforts to minimize food waste and loss, raise awareness of food waste, and facilitate food recovery that helps provide nutritious food for New York families and individuals that need it, saves consumers and businesses money and reduces our overall carbon footprint. We share the goals of the proposed legislation and welcomes further opportunities to discuss with the Council ways to enhance our comprehensive food waste strategy and clarify some of the assumptions underlying the bill.

Conclusion

Central to our conversation today is the principle that creating a strong and equitable food system supports the long-term health and wellbeing of individuals and the City as a whole. The act of breaking bread plays a central role, in not sustenance alone, but in building community and identity. Our vision is that New York City becomes a network of communities where everyone can reach their full potential, in part, due to their access to healthy and affordable food regardless of where they live in the City, their income level, age, gender identity, or race and ethnicity.

With the shared goal of greater food equity, we look forward to working with Council to strengthen the existing initiatives while developing bold new policies. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We are happy to answer any questions.



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

September 18, 2019

**Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Testimony before the New York City Council Committees on Education,
General Welfare and Economic Development Hearing
On New York City Food Policy**

My name is Gale A. Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President. Thank you to Chairs Treyger, Levin and Vallone and the members of the Committees on Education, General Welfare and Economic Development for the opportunity to testify today. Congratulations as well to Speaker Corey Johnson, the sponsors of these bills and the many advocates here today for their work to elevate solutions that make our city's food system more just and accessible.

With such a robust agenda, I will narrowly focus my comments on the following issues: summer meals, agency food procurement, and school sustainability coordinators.

Every year since I was elected to this office, my staff has created detailed, neighborhood-specific, multilingual fliers for the Summer Meals program. A team of dedicated volunteers, advocates, and staff annually distribute thousands of these fliers at schools, libraries, tenant associations, NYCHA developments, homeless shelters, park sites, food pantries and soup kitchens, religious institutions, senior centers, and community based organizations serving youth and families, beginning before the end of the school year and continuing well into the summer.

In late 2017, then-Council Member James Vacca and I passed a new law requiring the Department of Education to distribute summer meal information by June 1 of each year. This deadline is critical to effective outreach because scheduling and other details vary from site to site. The Department of Education promotional materials direct families to use the Feed Your Mind app, 311, or the Department of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) website. As you all know, I am a strong advocate of using technology to enhance city services. But year in and year out, we hear from school staff and parents that these printed fliers are essential to connecting families to the program.

Intro 1675 of 2019:

Intro 1675 would require the Department of Education to mail information about summer meals to the home address of every student eligible for the federal free and reduced price lunch program by June 1. I agree and recommend that the bill be amended to reflect the program eligibility and therefore be distributed to all families with students who are 18 years and younger.

Simply put, children cannot participate in the program if they don't know where (and when) to eat. In 2019, OFNS provided each school with envelopes advertising the summer meals program for backpacking end of year information – this is a practical start, but those envelopes should provide families where and when information.

While summer meal site information has been made available on or even before June 1 for the past couple of years, many potential meal sites including NYCHA developments remain unconfirmed well past the June 1 deadline. These sites are left off of promotional materials limiting their effectiveness. It's my understanding that the delay in confirming sites also contributes to operational issues with the summer meals texting service that is heavily promoted across the city. This past June my staff texting from an upper West Side zip code were referred to New Jersey sites, and a Cobble Hill query recommended several sites in Long Island. Once we shared these issues with DOE, they were quickly resolved. But NYCHA, OFNS, Parks and other participating agencies need to confirm their site information by the June 1 deadline.

This spring I convened a Summer Meals Task Force including representatives from OFNS, Parks, NYCHA, Department of Social Services, Youth, Community Boards, NYCHA resident association leaders, CSA, Community Education Councils, emergency food providers, food security advocates, and others.

Next week I will share the full summary of the improvements that were implemented this season with recommendations for next year. Task force members brought a breadth of experience and knowledge and I thank all who participated. Christopher Tricario and Armando Taddei at OFNS should be recognized for their responsiveness including opening PS 188 mid-summer to provide Lower East Side families with a summer meal site option that didn't require children to perilously cross Delancey Street. Responding to our concerns that children at city pools were being told that they had to wear bathing suits or even swim in order to receive a meal, the Parks Department worked with pool managers and staff to make sure that they understand program eligibility rules and that there is a meal service area that does not conflict with Department of Health pool deck clothing rules.

Many task force members raised the issue of food insecure and hungry caregivers accompanying children to the program sites who both openly and discreetly were partaking of summer meals. Several sites were shut down for this practice because federal reimbursement is limited to children 18 years and younger. However, our response to the crisis of food insecurity cannot be to reduce youth summer meal availability. I support launching a pilot next summer to provide adult caregivers with food at summer meal program sites. In 2013, Connecticut launched a partnership with End Hunger CT! to fund adult meals, significantly increasing their sites' overall participation.

Intro 1660 of 2019:

All New Yorkers need as much access as possible to fresh, healthy, locally-sourced food. Agency procurement is a pathway to realizing this goal. Intro 1660 seeks to create a good food purchasing program that encourages food procurement motivated by environmental sustainability, local economies, health, valued workforce and animal welfare. In 2011 the

Council passed a package of bills aimed at expanding agency purchasing of New York State grown or produced foods, including Local Laws 50 and 52. I feel very strongly about the potential impact of these laws in expanding New Yorkers' access to healthy, fresh, and locally sourced foods that also deliver environmental and economic benefits downstate and upstate. Some agencies have more energetically embraced this considerable toolkit than others and some vendors like the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House exemplify its goals. Yet it is clear that there is a lack of information about the degree to which the City is utilizing its buying power to support local farms.

Local Law 50 of 2011:

The bill I introduced, Local Law 50 of 2011, encourages City agencies and vendors to purchase food grown or produced in New York State by establishing tools of procurement. These include a price preference within 10% of the lowest responsible bidder; mandating that particular products come from New York State; and 'best value' provisions that ensure freshness by limiting the length of time between harvest and delivery. The law also requires the City's Chief Procurement Officer to provide an annual report of the efforts during the preceding fiscal year to implement the City guidelines for the purchase of New York State food.

According to the Fiscal Year 2017 Local Law 50 report, only 59 vendors from across the five boroughs were sent surveys, of which only 11 responded. As per the Fiscal Year 2018 report, 66 vendors were sent surveys and only 3 responded. The limited pool of vendors surveyed along with the abysmal response rate creates an immense information gap that contributes to an incomplete understanding of the challenges we face in increasing procurement of locally grown and produced products.

Local Law 52 of 2011:

Additionally, Local Law 52 of 2011 requires that the annual City food system metrics report accounts for the money spent on local or regionally sourced food. For example, the amount of money spent on dairy by the Department of Education is present but not the amount spent on meat or baked goods, items that are consumed in large quantities and even featured as part of the OFNS's New York Thursday menu. The reports do not capture enough data on how City funds are spent on food procurement and the methodology for data collection needs to be amended accordingly.

Access to fresh and local food for vulnerable and low-income populations is the most pressing food and nutrition issue facing New Yorkers today and a cornerstone of my office's age-friendly initiatives. Our Fresh Food for Seniors program (a version of which I first opened in my City Council district in 2012), established in partnership with senior centers from Washington Heights down to Battery Park City (and Roosevelt Island!) and colleagues including Speaker Corey Johnson and Council Members Helen Rosenthal and Margaret Chin. The process is simple: seniors pay for a bag of fresh, regionally grown fruit and vegetables aggregated by GrowNYC's Greenmarket Co. wholesale program for \$8 a week in advance at a participating senior center, and pick up their produce the following week.

The impending redesign of the Department for the Aging's (DFTA) Home Delivered Meal and Senior Center Nutrition Programs is another excellent opportunity to increase older adult access to fresh, locally sourced, and sustainable foods. This May, my office convened a meeting of Manhattan senior center food services staff with DFTA, GrowNYC and Lenox Hill Neighborhood House to discuss the various possibilities and challenges to integrating local produce into their congregate meal programs. Despite my office working with DFTA and GrowNYC over six years ago to ensure that senior centers could swap local seasonally available produce into their pre-submitted menus, senior center food service staff said that they still encountered difficulty implementing healthier menu changes or obtaining produce swapping approval from DFTA nutritional staff. Additional barriers, like sufficient funding for kitchen equipment and food service workers should also be addressed in the upcoming RFP in consultation with staff from Lenox Hill whose *Teaching Kitchen* has significantly transformed food programs at over 100 participating nonprofits to include more fresh, healthy and local food through their daylong training and invaluable technical assistance.

Intro 1681 of 2019:

Lastly, the New York City Administrative Code 16-307.1 on School Recycling designates that each school's sustainability coordinator set goals and policies, implement, and report on the school's waste prevention, reuse and recycling plan. Intro 1681 would add the food waste prevention plan to the sustainability coordinator's responsibilities. On a policy level, this is a sensible addition and would ensure the tracking and reduction of schools' food waste. On a practical level, however, a school's sustainability coordinator is often a science teacher or the assistant principal who do not receive additional resources to support their work in guiding their school toward zero waste.

In 2015, PS 130M (Hernando De Soto School) received distinctions as both the citywide elementary division winner of the Department of Sanitation's Golden Apple Super Recycler Award and the first-prize winner of GrowNYC's Recycling Champions "Big Lift" Award. My staff reached out to PS 130M's sustainability coordinator, Ms. Wen Min Yu Nicklas, to learn from her how to best encourage recycling and organics separation in schools and included her best practices into a resource package for all Manhattan DOE schools.

Yet even the best of the best was operating with insufficient resources—Ms. Nicklas used her lunch hour to work on recycling messaging for the school and to organize Student Green Team members. Since 2015, my office has remained up-to-date with the professional development and curriculum support that DOE's Office of Sustainability provides to its sustainability coordinators. Yet to date there is no budgetary support for the added work that these amazing teachers and assistant principals have been doing.

Intro 1681 further expands the scope of a sustainability coordinator's work. It is time that we recognize the importance of reporting on recycling and waste prevention—including food waste prevention—by allocating resources in the budget to support our schools' sustainability coordinators.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I would be remiss in ending my remarks without asking all of you here today to join me in submitting comments by Monday, September 23 in opposition to the Trump Administration's proposal to eliminate the SNAP program's broad-based categorical eligibility provision. These changes would withdraw food assistance from over three million people and free school meals for more than a quarter-million children — not to mention the harsh impact on local grocery stores and farms that depend on this economic activity.



STATEMENT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
EDUCATION, AND GENERAL WELFARE
RE: FOOD LEGISLATION

Mark Izeman and Margaret Brown

September 18, 2019

Good afternoon, my name is Mark Izeman and I am a Senior Attorney and the New York Regional Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

NRDC is a not-for-profit legal and scientific organization active on a wide range of public health, environmental, and quality of life issues across the country, around the world and in New York City -- where our headquarters has been located since our founding in 1970. For almost five decades, NRDC has had a team of lawyers, scientists and other experts working exclusively on environmental and public health matters affecting New Yorkers, including public transit, parks and community gardens, air and water quality, solid waste, clean energy, and environmental justice. And over the past decade, we have had a team dedicated to creating a healthy, sustainable and just food system here in the New York region.

“Food is the single strongest lever to optimize human health and environmental sustainability on Earth.”

This striking statement comes from a recently released report (LANCET, 2019) by leading scientists from more than 16 countries. We commend the City Council for holding this hearing and recognizing that food is a critical health, environmental, and social justice issue for this city - and an opportunity for New York to be a continued leader.

We are honored to be here today with so many amazing advocates and groups working on the frontlines of food and agriculture in our city.

Instead of focusing on any one bill, our brief statement today will discuss three broad themes that we believe are critical for the city’s overall food system goals.

- First, the importance of transparency and meaningful and diverse stakeholder engagement.
- Second, the central role of food in addressing the climate crisis.
- And third, the power of food to create wealth in low income communities.

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

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With respect to the first point, we believe the City should continue to engage with city agencies, non-profits, neighborhood organizations, and residents to ensure that policies are crafted in a way that works for New Yorkers. Frequent updates on policy efforts should be shared with the public and there should be numerous and varied opportunities for feedback. In particular, the City should ensure that those who do not work on these issues in a professional capacity can be heard. Fixing our food system requires listening carefully to our friends and neighbors who are most impacted by the current, broken industrial-based food system.

Our second point is that any new legislation should more explicitly link food to the City's ambitious and urgent climate goals. Worldwide, food and agriculture, broadly defined, is responsible for as much as 25% or more of greenhouse gas emissions. What we choose to eat, and how it is grown, distributed, and disposed of, has huge climate implications.

There are key strategies that New York and other cities can use—and in some cases are already deploying – to address climate change through food. For example, the city could buy more plant-based and less climate-intensive foods. Amazingly, beans and lentils are roughly 34 times less carbon intensive than beef. The city could also do more to reduce food waste: roughly 40% of food in this country is wasted—and globally food waste is responsible for 8% of total greenhouse gas emissions. More generally, how the city protects its “foodshed” – both farmland within and outside the city -- can play a big role in addressing climate change. Indeed, as a recent United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (Climate Change and Land, 2019) underscores, our land and soil is an important source and sink for greenhouse gas.

To be sure, in each of these areas the city has made important advances—from Meatless Mondays to the organics collection effort. But it is time to double down on this work. Indeed, in just two days, a youth-led climate strike is taking place here in New York and in cities around the globe to demand urgent climate action. We need to take all possible steps to address this crisis—and food will need to play a greater role in our collective climate battle plan moving forward.

And finally, our third point is that we believe the city should help harness the power of food to reinvest, and build wealth, in low income communities and communities of color. So many of the public health challenges we face today are the result of longstanding structural racism and disinvestment in communities of color.

To solve these issues, we must work to address the underlying causes -- and not just the symptoms. The city should engage with residents as not just consumers of food, but owners and entrepreneurs in the food system. Whether as farmers, small food businesses, or city contractors, the city should help disadvantaged New Yorkers chart a path to build greater wealth and keep more money in their communities.

We thank the Council for your leadership in introducing these bills. And we stand ready to work with the Council and the many amazing groups here today to move closer to a healthy, sustainable and just food system for all New Yorkers.



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**Testimony of City Harvest
The Committee on General Welfare, the Committee on Economic Development and the
Committee on Education**

Joint Hearing on Growing Food Equity Bills

Good afternoon Chairpersons Levin, Treyger, Vallone and members of the three committees. Thank you for holding this hearing today on the 16 proposed resolutions and bills that were represented in the *Growing Food Equity in New York City: A City Council Agenda*. City Harvest stands with the City's anti-hunger community and food system advocates in applauding the Council's attention to food equity in these 16 critical proposals. As New York City's largest food rescue operation, we recognize the importance of having a comprehensive approach to building food equity across our City that goes in and beyond the emergency food system. While food rescue and food access are built into City Harvest's core operation, we recognize that the opportunity to leverage our City agencies' purchasing power to empower the local food system through a values-driven approach to food procurement, a comprehensive approach to urban agriculture, a refined Food System Metric Report, the expansion of scratch cooked meals in public schools, and the access and usability of SNAP for the oft overlooked food insecure student population and seniors, are all integral strategies for empowering all members of our local food system.

City Harvest has the pleasure to collaborate with many of the experts and advocates from across the food system that are testifying on a number of the proposals. Today, we want to emphasize the opportunities that Int 1681 and Int 1673 pose for private and public partnership to reduce food waste, as well as the significance that Int 1666 Office of Food Policy present for the viability of all of these efforts. We will also shed light on our partnerships with other food equity champions that are testifying on the Council's comprehensive approach.

Food Waste Reduction

Established in 1982, **City Harvest** is New York City's largest food rescue organization, helping to feed the nearly 1.2 million New Yorkers who are struggling to put meals on their tables. This year, we will rescue 64 million pounds of food that would otherwise go to waste, from farms, grocers, manufacturers, and restaurants. More than half of this food will be fresh produce. We will deliver this food, free of charge, to hundreds of food pantries, soup kitchens, and other community partners across the five boroughs.

The proposed food waste prevention plans for city agencies and the DOE in Int 1673 and Int 1681 presents an incredible opportunity for public-private partnership to reduce food waste and increase food access at emergency food programs across the City. Since 2016, City Harvest has partnered with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Sanitation to rescue over 120,000 pounds of food-safe, fresh produce through DSNY's mobile food vendor confiscations and delivered it to numerous pantries across the City. Some of the challenges with the food rescue partnership have involved limited

time to respond to food vendor confiscation calls from local precincts. Because of the live turnaround and nature of the operation, there are some instances when City Harvest is unable to balance our scheduled food donation and delivery operations with the timing, location and volume of the food vendor confiscations. However, our involvement has enabled us to establish internal best practices for similar food rescue operations. Hence, we continue to rescue more produce from the operation. As conversations with school nutrition and meal prep staff and anecdotes shed light on the volume of food waste that accompanies the daily operation of an agency as large as the DOE, we invite the opportunity to share best practices and solutions with the City.

Additionally, from providing programming at public schools and as active members in school food advocacy spaces, we have observed a number of opportunities to reduce school food waste through efforts such as schools in Colorado that send at-risk students home with food that was prepared but not served, schools in New Jersey that have implemented "share tables" for students to donate unopened food for other classmates to access (it reduced waste by nearly 100,000 pounds last year and saved over \$76,000), and the preemptive approach of increase school lunch participation through cafeteria redesigns and scratch cooking. We welcome the opportunity to help the city reduce food waste at City schools and other City agencies.

City Harvest is looking forward to the prospect of serving as a resource and thought-partner for city agencies' food waste prevention plans

Office of Food Policy

Underlining the viability of the majority of the food equity agenda is the need for a strong Office of Food Policy that is empowered to plan and implement the proposed strategies. City Harvest's Chief Executive Officer, Jilly Stephens participated in Deputy Mayor Herminia Palacio's recent stakeholder roundtable to discuss efforts to rebuild the Office of Food Policy following its transitions in leadership. We expressed our support for and advocated that this office lead the charge in coordinating and articulating the strategies that reduce food insecurity numbers in NYC.

Furthermore, we recognize the importance of a strong Office of Food Policy to lead the City's efforts in supporting healthy food retail work through efforts like NYCEDC's FRESH Initiative that support the expansion of grocery stores in underserved communities, facilitate entrepreneurship, create jobs and stimulate the local economy. We are a member of the Healthy Food Retail Action Network (HFRAN), HFRAN has historically enjoyed a mutually insightful and collaborative relationship with the Office of Food Policy and remains at the ready for future joint efforts to support access and affordability of healthy and culturally appropriate food in our communities.

The success of Int 1666 is critical for protecting the progress we have made with the Office of Food Policy and to expand its ability to support local food retail, local food metrics, SNAP access strategies and many of the other food equity policy proposals in the City Council's Agenda.

Other Partnerships: Community Food Advocates and NYC4CNR

Beyond our emergency food operations, City Harvest also partners with many of the champions in this room who have collectively advocated to improve New York City's food system. City Harvest currently participates in **Community Food Advocates (CFA) and the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute's Good Food Purchasing Program** planning group as a member of the **Local Economies Work Group**. The coalition believes that the City can effectively leverage its purchasing power to source local, sustainable and healthful food with care for the workers, land and animals involved in the food procurement process. The success of GFPP is critical for strengthening racial equity and transparency throughout the food supply chain, and in turn, building access to healthy foods for students, patients, our seniors and other populations who rely on institutions for their meals daily beyond the emergency food system.

City Harvest is also a long standing member of **CFA's Lunch4Learning campaign**, and continues to join them in engaging the council to improve school food participation and food appeal through efforts like the cafeteria redesigns, the expansion of halal and kosher school meals, and the expansion of scratch cooking. Participation rates and access to healthy, high quality meals at schools are integral to improving food success to all New Yorkers and providing budget relief to the families of the nearly 1.1 million children that are in the public school system, many of whom are getting their most important meal during the school day. In alignment with our coalition partners, we are also asking for the Council's Int 1676 to not only evaluate the existing scratch cooking operations across the DOE, but to also develop an implementation plan that identifies strategies for overcoming barriers and geographic equity in its expansion.

At the intersection of both of these coalition spaces is the prospect of a long overdue **Child Nutrition Reauthorization** bill, which might be introduced by the Senate this fall. Child Nutrition Act (CNR) governs the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infant and Children (WIC), and other federal programs that provide food to children and their families. In collaboration with anti-hunger organizations across the city and nation, **NYC4CNR** continues to engage Congress to pass a CNR that strengthens summer meals, increases grants for farm-to-school, provides resources for school food agencies to update their equipment and provide more scratch cooking, and many of the other food policy approaches that NYC continues to lead. We are eager at the prospect of CNR aligning with many of the priorities of the City Council's food equity agenda.

Conclusion

Thank you for holding today's hearing on resolutions and introductions linked to City Council's Agenda for Growing Food Equity. City Harvest welcomes all 16 of the proposal and the opportunity it poses for City Council and food system advocates to strengthen and expand the powerful work that is being done to improve food equity across the City. City Harvest remains committed to working with the City on policy solutions that help New Yorkers become more food secure.

Jerome Nathaniel, Associate Director of Policy and Government Relations
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**Testimony of Mr. Joel Berg
Chief Executive Officer, Hunger Free America**

**For Hearing on Proposed Food and Hunger Legislation
Before the New York City Council Committee on Economic Development jointly
with Committee on General Welfare and Committee on Education**

September 18, 2019

I am Joel Berg, Chief Executive Officer of Hunger Free America, a nationwide direct service and advocacy organization based in New York City. I thank the Council for holding this vital hearing.

Background on Still Sky-High Food Insecurity in New York City and New York State

While there are many food-related changes in New York City, the most important is hunger and food insecurity. Hunger Free America's 2018 report on hunger in New York City and State, based on our analysis of federal food insecurity data, found:

- Hunger decreased in New York City, the New York Metropolitan Region, and New York State over the last six years, but remained higher than before the recession. This is the first time in at least the last two decades that food insecurity in the state, city, and region have demonstrated sustained, multi-year reductions, likely because of increases in wages and employment.
- In New York City, the number of people living in food insecure households – unable to afford an adequate supply of food – decreased by 22 percent during the past six years, declining from 1.4 million people in 2012-2014 to 1.09 million in 2015-2017. However, the number is still 22 percent higher than the level of 0.892 million in 2005-2007, before the recession, and one in eight city residents still struggled against hunger. We must not accept mass deprivation in the wealthiest nation in world history as any sort of “new normal. Hunger is unacceptable in any society, but it’s particularly outrageous in a nation as wealthy as the United States and in a city as wealthy as New York.
- In 2015-17, 12.8 percent of the city’s population suffered from food insecurity, including 18 percent of all children, 8.9 percent of all employed adults, and 10.9 percent of all seniors.
- The Bronx remains New York City’s hungriest borough in every category, with more than one in four Bronx residents (26 percent) experiencing food insecurity. This includes more than 37 percent of all children, nearly 17 percent of working adults, and almost 24 percent of seniors.
- The number of children living in food insecure households in New York City is not decreasing as quickly as the overall number of food insecure people. While the number of food insecure individuals in New York City decreased by 22 percent from 2012-2014 to 2015-2017, the number of

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food insecure children (324,432 in 2015-2017) fell by 16 percent. Conversely, the number of food insecure working adults (351,912 in 2015-2017) experienced a larger drop of 26 percent in the same time period, likely due to the minimum wage increase.

- While food insecurity among working adults declined, most likely due to minimum wage increases, the area is still facing a “working hungry epidemic.” The number of adults working but still struggling against hunger in 2015-2017, was 351,912 in New York City, 666,852 in New York State, and 692,937 in the New York Metropolitan region.

Table 1 – Overall Food Insecurity in New York City

	NYC Citywide	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens
2015-17	1,090,936 (12.8%)	290,469 (26.3%)	368,799 (11.5%)	180,326 (11.3%)	202,417 (8.7%)
2012-14	1,403,496 (16.9%)	396,326 (29.6%)	569,659 (20.3%)	227,261 (13.6%)	192,416 (8.4%)
2005-07	892,214 (12.1%)	246,128 (20.6%)	211,988 (9.5%)	179,016 (13.5%)	200,366 (8.8%)

Figure 1 – Overall Food Insecurity by Borough

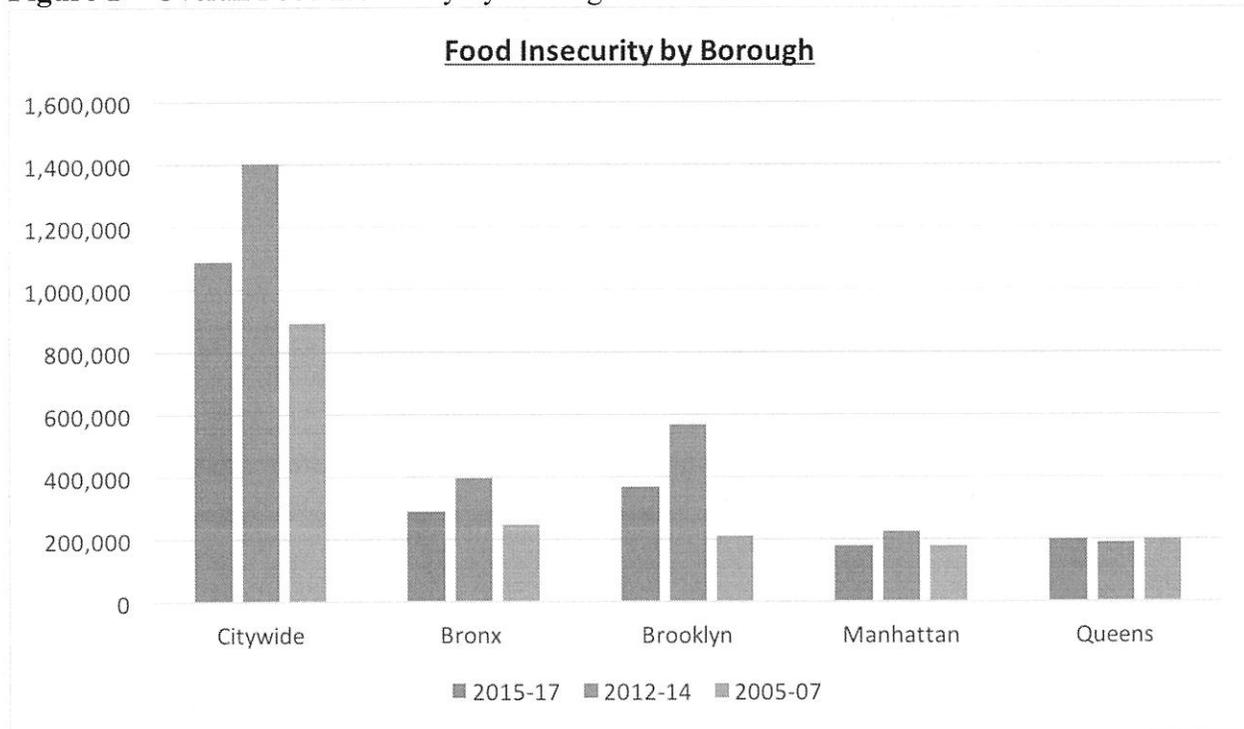




Table 2 – Food Insecurity Among Children in New York City

	NYC Citywide	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens
2015-17	324,432 (18.0%)	95,365 (37.6%)	105,122 (14.2%)	47,761 (17.5%)	56,619 (11.8%)
2012-14	385,004 (21.4%)	100,963 (30.6%)	186,657 (25.2%)	42,006 (17.8%)	74,556 (11.3%)
2005-07	271,689 (15.4%)	92,453 (23.6%)	74,034 (13.4%)	43,922 (20.8%)	54,810 (10.2%)

Figure 2 – Food Insecurity Among Children by Borough

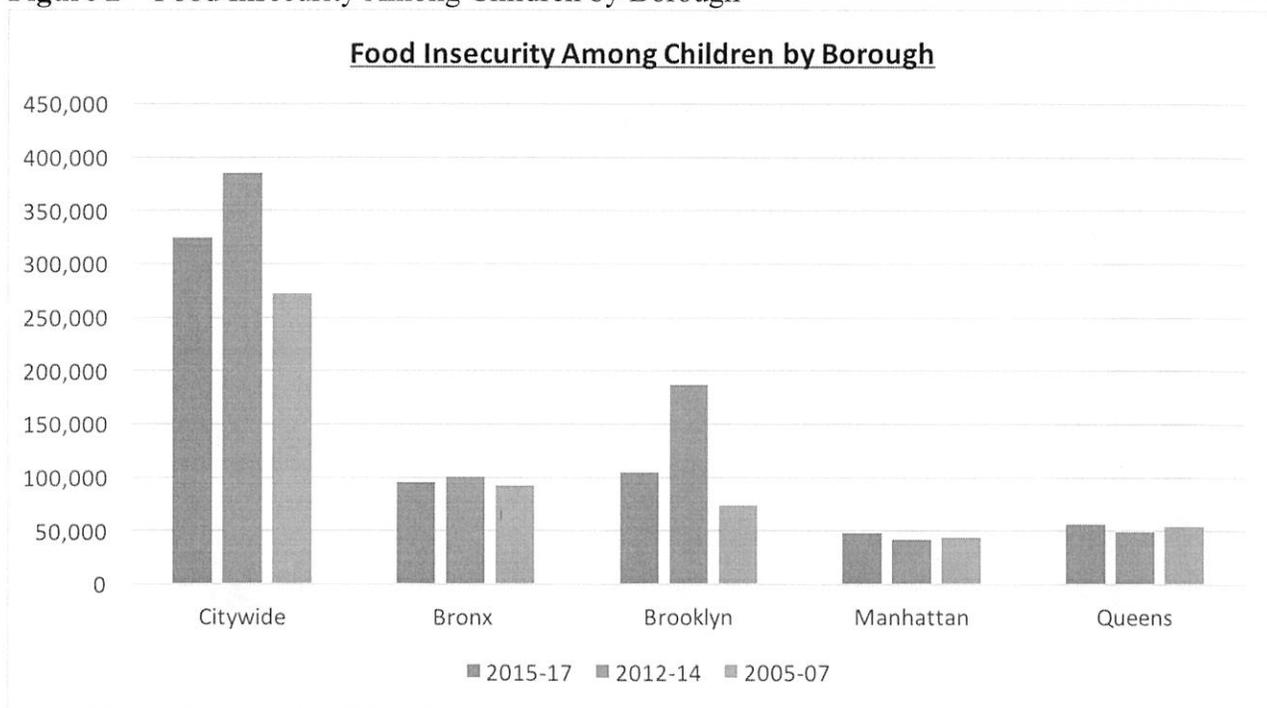




Table 3 – Food Insecurity Among Employed Adults in New York City

	NYC Citywide	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens
2015-17	351,912 (8.9%)	67,896 (16.7%)	113,148 (7.9%)	74,509 (8.4%)	75,505 (6.9%)
2012-14	476,604 (12.7%)	128,796 (27.0%)	175,422 (14.9%)	80,456 (9.3%)	88,015 (7.9%)
2005-07	277,550 (8.3%)	69,606 (15.5%)	65,454 (6.8%)	58,827 (8.3%)	72,045 (6.8%)

Figure 3 – Food Insecurity Among Employed Adults by Borough

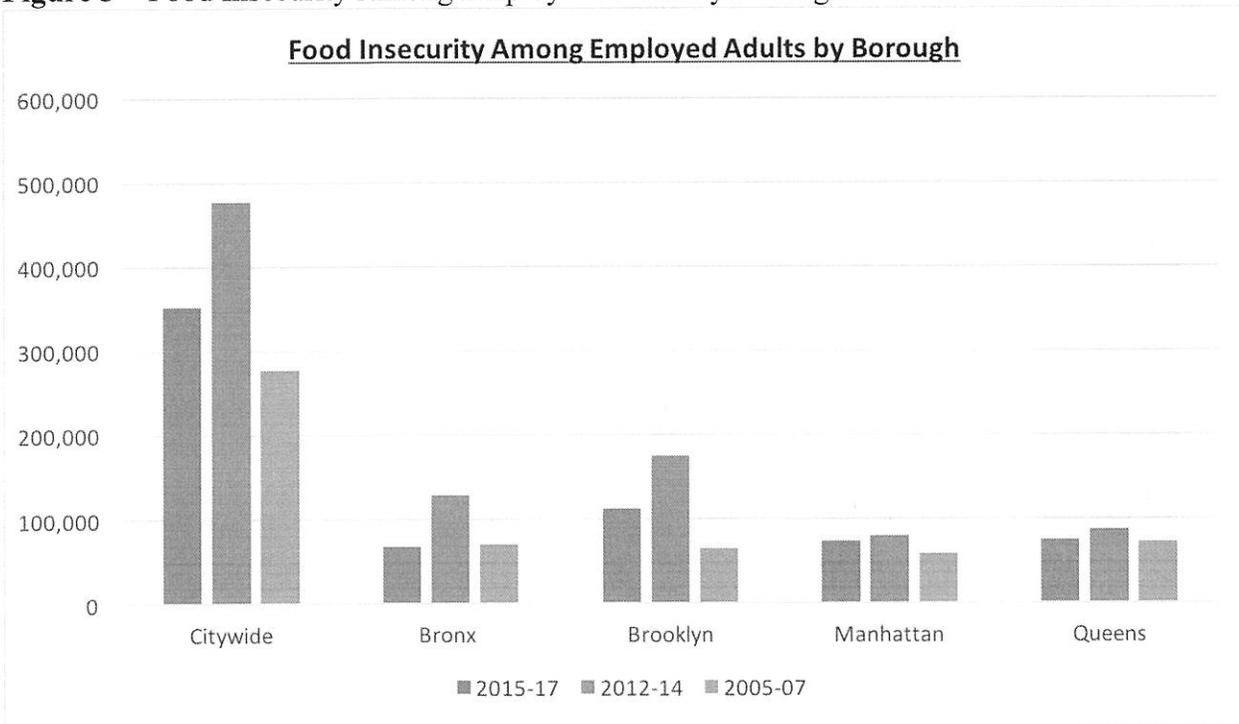
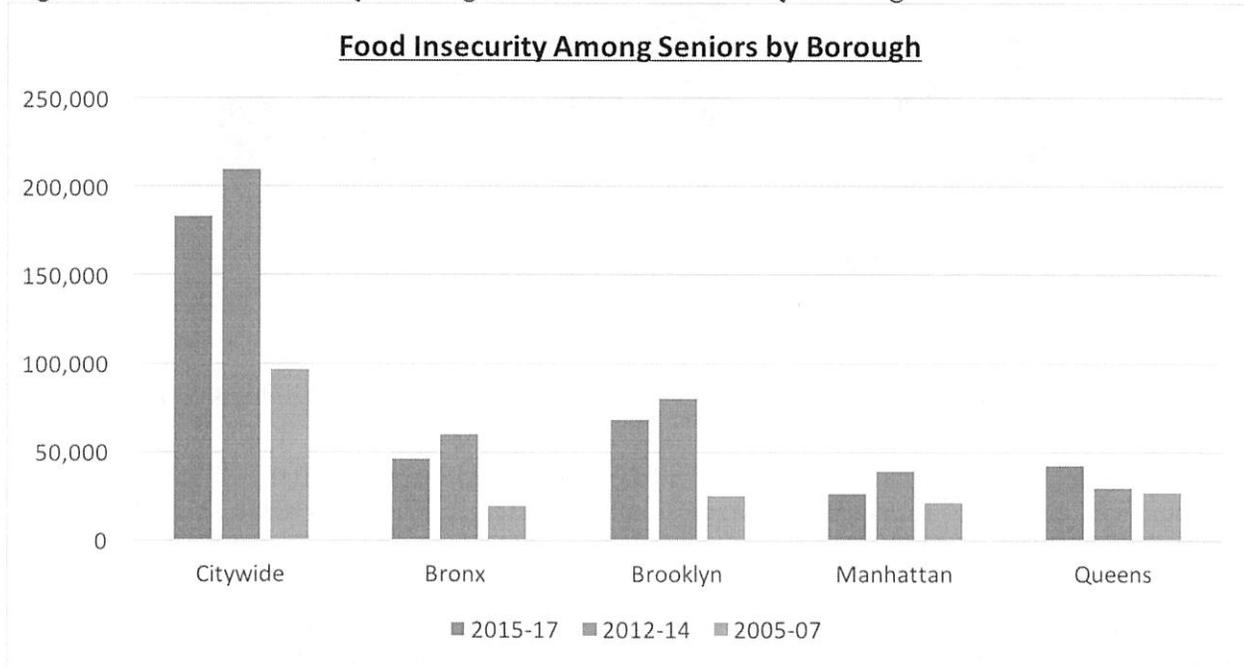




Table 4 – Food Insecurity Among Seniors (60+) in New York City

	NYC Citywide	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens
2015-17	183,290 (10.9%)	45,665 (23.7%)	67,789 (10.7%)	26,530 (9.0%)	42,103 (8.8%)
2012-14	209,892 (14.3%)	59,753 (27.1%)	80,160 (18.5%)	39,248 (11.6%)	29,326 (7.1%)
2005-07	96,609 (8.5%)	19,438 (12.2%)	24,860 (6.9%)	21,004 (9.5%)	27,204 (8.1%)

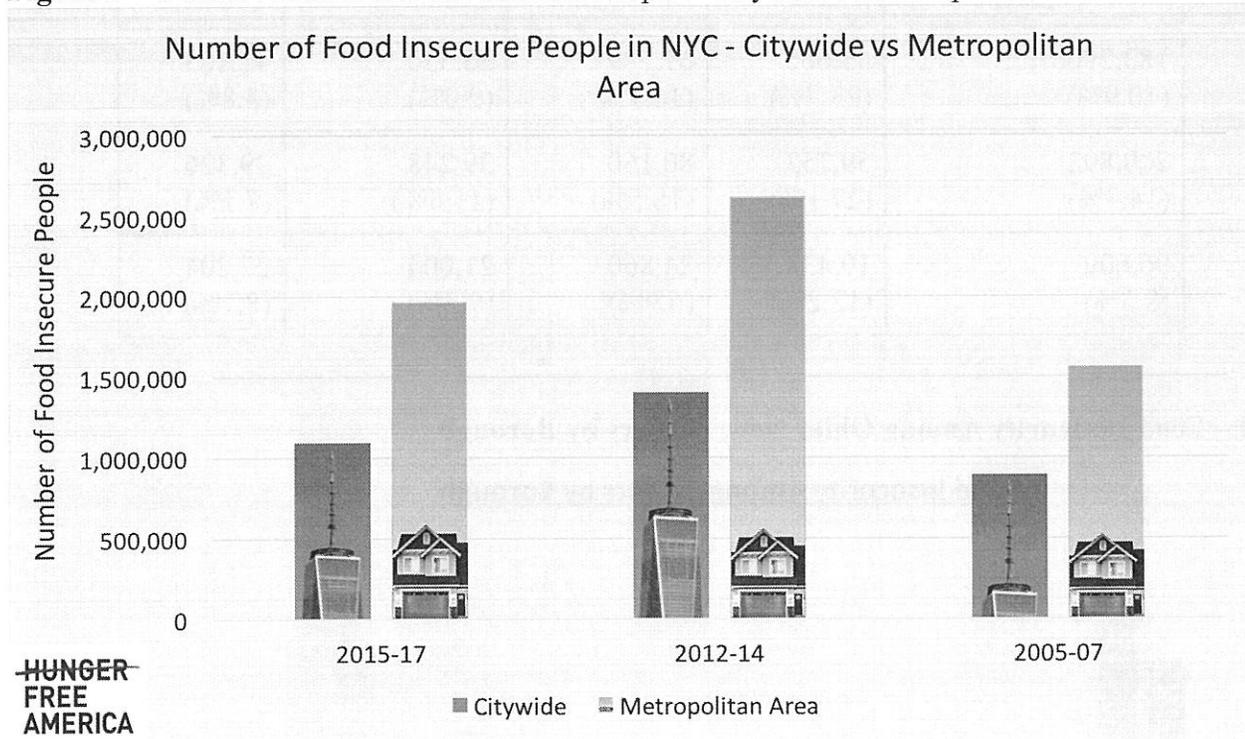
Figure 4 – Food Insecurity Among Older New Yorkers by Borough





For the first time, we compared hunger in New York City to the entire metropolitan area, which demonstrated that this is a widespread problem in both the city and the suburbs.

Figure 5 – Overall Number of Food Insecure People – Citywide vs Metropolitan



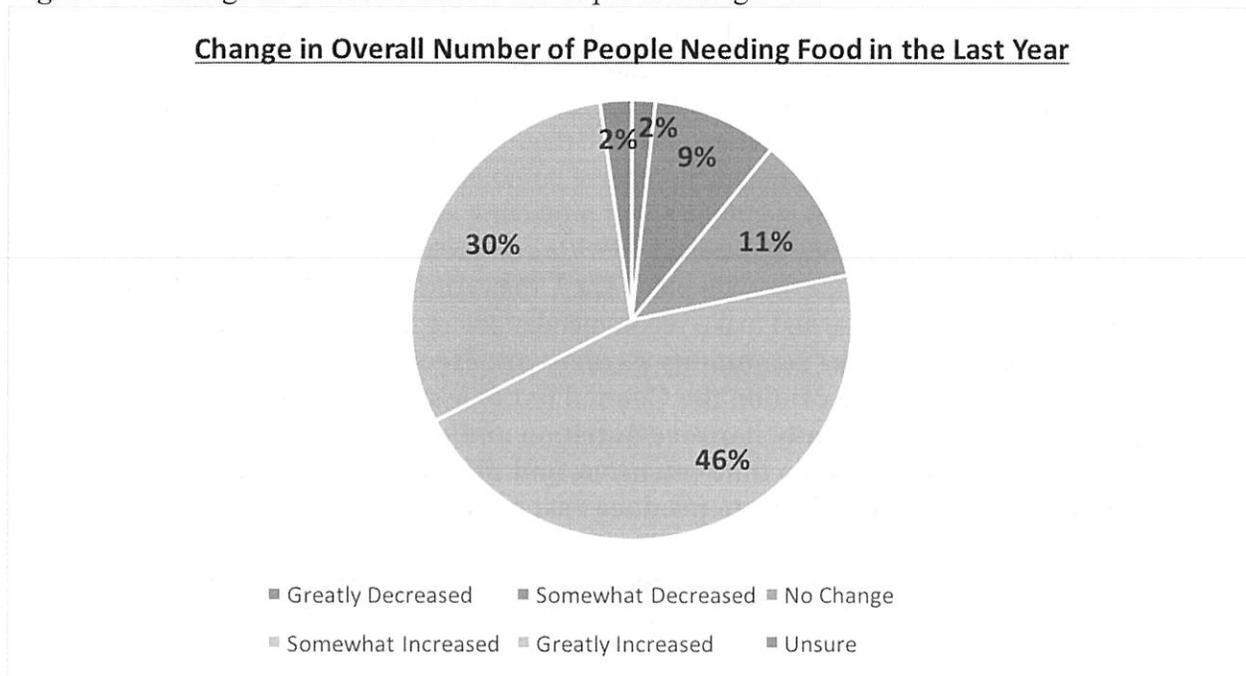
Hunger Free America's 2018 survey of New York City's food pantries and soup kitchens found:

- New York City food pantries and soup kitchens fed five percent more people in 2018 than the previous year, compared to annual increases of six percent in 2017, nine percent in 2016, and five percent in 2015.
- In 2018, 34 percent of pantries and kitchens in New York City were forced to turn people away, reduce their portion sizes, and/or limit their hours of operation due to a lack of resources. In contrast, the proportion of feeding agencies that were forced to reduce food distribution due to lack of resources was 38 percent in 2017 and 40 percent in 2016.
- When asked if the overall number of people needing food has changed in the last year, 30.3 percent of pantries and kitchens reported that it had greatly increased, while 45.7 percent said it had somewhat increased (figure 8). Collectively, 10.3 percent reported that the number of people needing food had decreased and 10.9 percent reported no change. When asked about specific



populations utilizing their services, 45.7 percent of kitchens and pantries reported an increase in homeless populations, 35.4 percent reported an increase in employed individuals, 65.2 percent reported an increase in families with children, 65.1 percent reported an increase in senior citizens/elderly, 47.4 percent reported an increase in immigrants, and 48.57 percent reported an increase in people who have lost or had reductions in their SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) benefits.

Figure 6 – Change in Overall Number of People Needing Food



Hunger Free America Positions on Pending Legislation:

In general, we strongly support the whole set of comprehensive legislation and express great thanks to Speaker Corey Johnson for taking such a visionary, broad approach to food issues.

Int 1650-2019 * Adrienne E. Adams: Provision of information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets. This bill would require the Human Resources Administration to provide information about the Health Bucks program and farmers markets to all individuals who receive or apply to receive supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits. **We support this measure but we note that funding for Health Bucks is limited, so more outreach without more benefits funding could potentially be counter-productive.**



Int 1652-2019 * Alicka Ampry-Samuel: Ensuring that community gardens are not classified as vacant land by the department of city planning. Introduction of this bill would require the Department of City Planning to categorize community gardens as open space in the Primary Land Use Tax Lot Output data set. Int 1653-2019 * Alicka Ampry-Samuel: Requiring the Department of parks and recreation to collect and report data regarding community gardens reporting and permitting the sale of agriculture within community gardens. This bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation to collect data on community gardens and issue an annual report summarizing this data. Additionally, this bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation to study the citywide ecological impacts of community gardens. This bill would also direct the agency to develop a system to permit community gardens to operate farmers markets within community gardens. Int 1663-2019 * Rafael L. Espinal, Jr. Establishing an office of urban agriculture and an urban agriculture advisory board. Introduction of this bill would establish an Office of Urban Agriculture and an Urban Agriculture Advisory Board. The Office of Urban Agriculture would conduct outreach, receive comments and respond to questions regarding urban agriculture, make recommendations about protecting and expanding urban agriculture, develop, in cooperation with other agencies and stakeholders, a comprehensive urban agriculture plan and make annual reports on progress made on such plan. The Urban Agriculture Advisory Board would consist of ten members and would advise and make recommendations regarding urban agriculture. **We support these measures, and we believe community gardens are excellent tools to provide and preserve open and safe spaces, but we caution the Council not to assume community gardens and/or urban agriculture can dramatically improve nutrition and/or reduce hunger in New York City. Land is too limited, gardening is too time-intensive, and the Norther growing seasons in New York City are all too limited for such efforts to produce vast amounts of food.**

Int 1654-2019 * Diana Ayala: Neighborhood awareness campaigns regarding farm-to-city projects. Introduction of this bill would require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to conduct neighborhood-specific public awareness and education campaigns regarding the City's farm-to-city projects, which include farmers' markets, community supported agriculture, food boxes, and fresh pantries. The Department shall also post all relevant information on its website. **We support this proposal and we would suggest that it also include Green Carts.**

Int 1659-2019 * Margaret S. Chin: Plan to identify and enroll seniors eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance benefits (SNAP). Introduction of this bill would require the Department of Social Services, working in collaboration with the Department for the Aging, to develop a plan to identify and enroll seniors who are eligible for supplemental nutritional assistance benefits, but who are not yet enrolled to receive such benefits. **We strong support this proposal and would further suggest that the City Council allocate additional funds to enable select nonprofit groups to help facilitate such applications.**

Int 1660-2019 * Andrew Cohen: Creating a good food purchasing program. Introduction of this bill would create a good food purchasing program and advisory board. The advisory board would include the commissioners of agencies that execute food procurement contracts, seven members appointed by the Mayor and seven members appointed by the Speaker with knowledge of the good food purchasing

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program value categories. The advisory board would conduct baseline assessments of each agency's food procurement process, then develop and submit a five-year plan with one-year, three-year and five-year benchmarks. The advisory board would evaluate the contract bids that are submitted, and each agency may consider the board's assessments. The advisory board would submit a progress report with recommendations to each agency, the Mayor and the Speaker, post the report on the website of the Mayor's Office of Food Policy and hold a public hearing about its findings. **We support this proposal.**

Int 1664-2019 * Vanessa L. Gibson: Requiring the office of food policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan. Introduction of this bill would require the Mayor's Office of Food Policy (MOFP) to consult with relevant agencies, community based organizations, community leaders and food system stakeholders that focus on food policy, food equity, food justice and food insecurity. The plan would set goals to reduce hunger, improve nutrition, increase access to healthy food, reduce food waste, develop and improve food and farm economies, and increase urban agriculture and sustainability. The MOFP would also be required to submit to the Mayor, the Speaker of the Council, and to post on its website a report assessing the city's progress toward the identified goals. The assessment would be based on food metrics data gathered in accordance with section 3-120 of the administrative code. **We strongly support this proposal.**

Int 1666-2019 * Ben Kallos: Establishment of an office of food policy. Introduction of this bill would establish an Office of Food Policy. The office would be responsible for, among other things, developing and coordinating initiatives to promote access to healthy food in the city; increasing access to and utilization of food support programs; coordinating the development of the annual food system metrics report with the office of long-term planning and sustainability; and working with the department of health and mental hygiene to update agency food standards. **We strongly support this proposal.**

Int 1673-2019 * Carlina Rivera: City agency food waste prevention plans. Introduction of this bill would require all city agencies with food procurement contracts to develop and implement a plan for reducing food waste. This bill would require each such agency to designate a coordinator to produce annual reports including information on the agency's food waste prevention plan and measures taken to implement such a plan. Int 1681-2019 * James G. Van Bramer: School food waste prevention plans. Introduction of this bill would require the Chancellor of the Department of Education (DOE) to work with school sustainability coordinators to develop a plan for reducing food waste. This plan would be submitted to the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) for recommendations, as well as the Speaker of the Council. The bill would require DOE to submit an annual report with information on DOE's actions to implement its food waste prevention plan and the Chancellor's updates to such a plan. **We support these proposals, and know that reducing food waste can provide a significant boost to the environment, but we caution that reducing food waste will not significantly decrease hunger.**

Int 1675-2019 * Deborah L. Rose: Distribution of information regarding summer meals. Introduction of this bill would require the Department of Education to mail information about summer meals to the home address of every student eligible for the federal free and reduced price lunch program. **We strongly support this proposal, but we believe it could be strengthened by requiring DOE to**

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sponsor summer meals sites in at least 90 percent of the census tracts which are eligible, under USDA guidelines, to host open summer meals sites.

Int 1676-2019 * Helen K. Rosenthal: Requiring the DOE to report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service. Introduction of this bill would require the New York City Department of Education to report to the council information regarding the Department's efforts to implement scratch-cooked food services in schools and related nutrition and health programming. **We support this proposal.**

Int 1680-2019 * Paul A. Vallone: Reporting requirements regarding the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food in the city required by Local Law 52 of 2011. Introduction of this bill would require the Office of Long-Term Planning and sustainability to expand its annual Food System Metrics Report to include additional information regarding: (1) the changing patterns of the retail availability of food; (2) the number of people eligible for public food programs but not enrolled; (3) the number of retailers who accept SNAP or other public benefits; (4) the density of fast-food establishments; (5) the number and percent of sub-populations experiencing food insecurity; and (6) the metrics charting progress towards reducing inequities in the distribution of food and diet-related diseases. OLTPS would also need to consider other sources of citywide data in developing the annual Food System Metrics Report. **We support this proposal.**

Res 1024-2019 * Farah N. Louis: Calling upon the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to expand eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to public college students. **We strongly support this proposal. The State should take concrete steps to make it easier for post-secondary school students to receive SNAP. Because student aid often fails to cover true living costs, many students struggle with hunger.**

About 60,000 CUNY undergraduates — about one in four — experience food insecurity, according to the CUNY Food Policy Institute. Even students at wealthier post-secondary institutions can't always afford enough food, as evidenced by the fact that students at Columbia University created a campus food pantry.

Nationwide, more than a third of college students struggle against hunger, according to a survey published by Temple University and the Wisconsin HOPE Lab. Yet a report by the United States General Accountability Office in 2018 analyzed data from 2016 and concluded that almost two million students who may be eligible for SNAP benefits failed to receive them. Campus food pantries should be the last – not the first – resort in fighting college student hunger. Since food pantry funding almost always comes out of limited, discretionary funding sources, any additional food and funds that would go to a college food pantry would likely come out of budgets for other vital efforts. Moreover, even the best food pantries and soup kitchens nationwide are not a great solution for hunger. They are humiliating, often have limited supplies of food, and offer recipients little or no choice. College students who live in dorms may not always have proper facilities to use them and those who commute would be forced to carry heavy food objects long distances.

Thus, when it comes to student hunger, New York State and City should focus first and foremost on making it easier for students to get SNAP benefits, which can be used at virtually any food store and most farmers markets. Here are four reasons why this is an even better approach:

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- a) SNAP benefits are paid entirely for by federal funds, as opposed to campus pantries, which are paid for by the state. Given the strict state budget cap, it is very difficult to make state funds available for even vital purposes. Given that reality, if a function can be funded mostly by the federal government instead of the state, we should certainly do everything to get the federal government to fund that function.
- b) If students get SNAP they can buy any food they need and will not be restricted by what pantries happen to have for them.
- c) Many students have long commutes. It would be much easier for them to buy food with SNAP near where they live than have to lug pantry food back home from campus.
- d) SNAP purchases bolster employment in the local food retail sector and at farmers markets, while food pantries don't aid job creation or business at farmers markets.

There are two ways for the state to make it easier for students to obtain SNAP. The first way, which New Jersey, Illinois, and Massachusetts have already done, is for New York State to make it easier for many community college students to access SNAP by defining essentially all community colleges as job training centers, as defined by SNAP regulations. Doing so wouldn't cost the state a penny other than the staff time of existing OTDA employees; furthermore, the Governor (through OTDA) has the unilateral authority to do this without the approval of either the state legislature or the federal government.

Normally, under federal law, college students usually can't get SNAP unless they work 20 hours or more on top of their studies, an impossibility for most full-time students. Here are the USDA rules that apply to SNAP eligibility for post-secondary students. See Section 273.5:

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2009-title7-vol4/pdf/CFR-2009-title7-vol4-sec273-5.pdf>

In general, college students attending school at least part time or more cannot obtain SNAP, no matter their income; however, there are many key exceptions. Here are a few of the key exceptions, as explained in that regulation, which means that students in these categories who are otherwise eligible by income and immigration status can obtain SNAP. These students:

- Are receiving TANF or disability payments.
- Have paid employment of 20 hours per week or more.
- Get federal or state-funded work study payments. (Note that this provision does not include a minimum number of hours of work – thus, even an hour of work a week could make a student SNAP eligible.)

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- Are participating in a State or federally-financed work study program during the regular school year.
- Are enrolled in an education and training program that is operated by a state or local government.

This last provision is key to what New York State should implement. Massachusetts has defined that provision to include most community colleges and state colleges since they provide education and training as defined by the USDA rules: <https://www.masslegalservices.org/content/food-stamps-snap-benefits-now-available-more-community-college-students>

Therefore, New York State could potentially define most income-eligible students at community colleges, CUNY schools, and SUNY schools as eligible for SNAP under this provision. The state of Pennsylvania did the same. See this link for more details: <https://clsphila.org/learn-about-issues/need-help-paying-food-most-community-college-students-can-now-get-snap-food>

Here is the state's implementation

memo: http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/c_271849.pdf

Illinois also did the same:

<http://foxillinois.com/news/local/40000-illinois-college-students-eligible-for-snap-benefits>

Just a few weeks ago, the State of New Jersey did the same:

<http://fios1news.com/news/new-jersey/health/murphy-administration-announces-expansion-to-snap-program-for-college-students/page/11/>

The State can also do a much better job of utilizing work-study slots to enable students to get SNAP. As noted in the regulation above, if a student works so much as one hour per week in a work-study job, that hour automatically meets the student work requirements for SNAP. Thus, for example, if a campus had funding for 100 hours of work study and allocated that to ten students working ten hours each, that could make SNAP available to ten times as many students as it would have if it allocated all 100 hours to one student.

Res 1025-2019 * Farah N. Louis: Opt into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Restaurant Meals Program to allow disabled, elderly and homeless SNAP recipients to use their benefits on hot meals and other prepared foods at participating grocery stores, delis and restaurants **We strongly support this proposal. We should make it far easier for people who are disabled, elderly and homeless to utilize their SNAP benefits.**

Other Key New York City Public Policy Steps Needed on Food

- 1) NYC DOE should aggressively and universally implement the new law requiring that all high-needs schools in the state serve breakfast in the classroom.

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have serious concerns that DOE has not complied with this requirement. We hope the Council can press DOE to do so fully.

2) NYC DOE should serve school lunches at appropriate lunch hours.

City Limits recently reported: “Throughout the city, public schools stretch the concept of ‘lunch,’ sending students to the cafeteria as early as 9 a.m. The extremely early lunches trouble staff, parents and advocates and seem to disproportionately occur at schools in low-income communities.”

When lunch hours are so off, students are far less likely to eat a healthy breakfast.

3) The City should implement a city-level H.O.P.E. pilot project, as detailed here <https://www.progressivepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/REPORT-Fighting-Poverty-with-HOPE.pdf> to make it easier to combine the increased use of digital technology with policy improvements to simplify the lives and boost the long-term self-sufficiency of our lowest-income residents by making it easier for families to obtain and use benefits and manage their finances digitally.

4) The Mayor and Council should increase funding to nonprofits for SNAP outreach.

Such SNAP outreach money is matched by the federal government. Funding should be prioritized for efforts that aid ABAWDS, older New Yorkers, immigrants, working families, and post-secondary students.

5) The Mayor and Council should fund a pilot project to pay for meals for parents at summer meals sites at which the federal government pays for meals for children.

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Despite the best efforts of SchoolFood, NYC has, for more than a decade, had one of the worst school breakfast participation rates out of any big city school district in the nation, according to a nationwide report on school breakfast by the Food Research and Action Center. Alas, that rate hasn't improved significantly under Mayor de Blasio. Data in a statewide report on school breakfast participation, by the respected group Hunger Solutions New York, is even troubling the nationwide report. The state report, which compares school breakfast participation to all kids eligible for free or reduce-price breakfast, shows, that, in the 2017-2018 school year, only 28 percent of eligible kids were getting breakfast, which is a reduction in the 28 percent rate from the 2016-2017 school year. As just one contrast, in the Central Islip Unified School District, 86 percent of eligible kids received school breakfasts; the district now has more kids eating breakfast than are even eating lunch. If NYC DOE merely ensured that 70 percent of kids getting lunch also got breakfast in their classrooms, that would provide federally-funded breakfasts to an additional 155,000 children each and every school day, bringing \$44.6 million in extra federal reimbursements to DOE. Given how strapped DOE is for funds, we simply can't fathom why the city could give up \$44.6 million in extra federal funds each year that would help kids be less hungry. While we are extremely grateful that the Council rejected the Mayor's proposal to cut funding for Breakfast in the Classroom, but we are still very concerned that DOE is not implementing this program fully.

State law now requires that NYC DOE afford breakfast after the bell to all students in about 1,100 of the highest needs schools. We hope that the Council will press the City to fully carry out that state mandate. Often when DOE reports on breakfast after the bell they only provide information for some classes in those schools. In those required schools, we hope the Council presses DOE to report on the percent of classrooms in each of those schools participating.

We worry that the City is violating the intent – and perhaps even the letter – of the new state law by trying to get around that requirement by offering limited breakfast opportunities after the bell in lunchrooms, as opposed to classrooms. When Governor Andrew Cuomo proposed, and the Legislature enacted, a new breakfast after the bell mandate, it was clear to me that their legislative intent of most who supported this was to ensure that districts were mandated to provide true breakfast after the bell, which has generally meant breakfast in the classrooms and grab-and-go breakfasts. In general, we have always referred to breakfasts served later in cafeterias as “second chance breakfasts.” In other words, to be used as secondary back-ups for the few kids who come to school too late to get breakfast in the classroom – not as a main way to serve kids breakfast. I believe that, when the breakfast mandate was enacted into law, it was envisioned that breakfast in the classrooms and grab-and-go breakfasts would be the main source of breakfast delivery in high needs schools, and that the meals served later in cafeterias would only be back-ups. Plus, if one of the main objections to breakfast in the classroom is the supposed loss of learning time, why would the state allow districts to further reduce learning time by having students spend extra learning time in a cafeteria?

State law specifically mandates: “In determining a service delivery model (for breakfast in the classroom), schools shall consult with teachers, parents, students and members of the community.” We

ENDING HUNGER LIFTS US ALL



Testimony Submitted by
Chef Gregory Silverman, Executive Director
West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH)
Before The New York City Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on
Education and Committee on General Welfare

Joint Meeting on Growing Food Equity Bills
September 18, 2019

My name is Chef Gregory Silverman and I am the Executive Director of the West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH). Thank you to Chairpersons Paul Vallone, Mark Treyger and Steven T. Levin as well as the members of the City Council Committees on Economic Development, Education and General Welfare for holding today's joint hearing on legislation to advance food equity in New York City.

I am here today, representing West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) and our **community** of almost 12,000 families who come to us from across NYC to gain access to healthy food and supportive services. Founded in 1979, West Side Campaign Against Hunger is the country's first supermarket-style, multi-service food pantry, and one of the largest emergency food providers in New York City. The West Side Campaign Against Hunger alleviates hunger by ensuring that all New Yorkers have access with **dignity** to a **choice** of healthy food and supportive services.

In the last year, we provided over 1.6 million pounds of food, which included over 600 thousand pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, to nearly 12,000 households. Our customers are overjoyed that we serve 41% fresh produce, this is unheard of anywhere else in NYC, let alone the United States. Fresh, healthy, appetizing produce helps us battle not only short term food insecurity but support the health and well being of families in need. As the speaker has said, "**Access to adequate nutritious food is a human right...**"

EFAP (Emergency Food Assistance Program) has been touted as a huge win in NYC with its 22 million dollar baseline in the budget. But let us be clear that this 41% fresh, healthy, nutritious, produce we distribute at WSCAH does not come from EFAP. EFAP distributes 22 million dollars of processed foods to New Yorkers in need. There is no ability within EFAP to

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give any choice of fresh product to any New Yorkers and this is a tragedy for the health and dignity of our NYC community!

We remind City Council members of the state of EFAP as an example of the importance of the city of New York to focus its efforts on a joined up approach, a collective action to change the food system in New York City. While we support the passage of all of the worthy bills being considered in today's hearing, we submit this testimony regarding:

- **Int 1660 - In relation to creating a good food purchasing program.**
- **Int 1664 - In relation to requiring the office of food policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan.**
- **Int 1666 - In relation to the establishment of an office of food policy.**

Today I am here to highlight the importance of INT 1664 requiring the formulation of a 10 year food policy plan. One of the largest metropolitan areas on the planet is neglecting its population without having a 10 year plan like many other progressive cities around the world have formulated. Its high time to put time and energy into our food system.

In order to give real meaning to this effort of both a 10 year plan we encourage the city to support the creation of an independent Food Policy Council made up of community based groups, community leaders, and other stakeholders with expertise in food justice, policy, access and insecurity that the Director of the Office of Food Policy would be required to work with and consult in the creation of the 10 Year Food Policy Plan. This council should not be made up of Mayor and Speaker appointees, but rather of community food experts identified through a public open call for nomination process.

I would recommend within this plan of INT 1664 to build out INT 1660 creating a good food purchasing program which will help guarantee a healthy, and equitable food supply chain, building out INT1666 establishing an office of food policy and INT nt 1663 - to establish an office of urban agriculture and an urban agriculture advisory board. The incredibly important laundry list of items on today's agenda is evidence of the need for a joined up approach, and mostly can be built out through this ten year plan. This is a priority. A city the size of New York is running too many parallel programs, with lack of engagement or efficiency for our community and has no joined up policy approach to tackling hunger, poverty, food waste, ag and the food shed, or simply making sure all have access to healthy, affordable, sustainable food.

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Truth be told, our WSCAH community of 22,000 customers care less about plans and bills. Our community care firstly about feeling safe and supported and our city, state and federal government are not taking care of this. Over 73% of our customers who are part of WSCAH are LatinX, many first generation immigrants and in a sanctuary city such as New York, they do not feel safe. Just last week three customers asked to get taken off SNAP and Medicaid due to fear about immigration issues. In NYC these friends, neighbors, colleagues are refusing public sector benefits and prefer to be supported by charity.

Creating office and policies is important but today in America, our community demands protection and support. Elected officials must stand up, not with words, but with actions to gather funds and support for all the people living, working, and surviving in NYC. The West Side Campaign Against Hunger would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today. WSCAH and our community look forward to helping continue to strengthen our food system as a core piece of helping make sure we provide all New Yorkers access with dignity to a choice of healthy food and supportive services.

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Testimony

In Support of

Int 1650, in relation to the provision of information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets.

Int 1659 - In relation to a plan to identify and enroll seniors eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance benefits.

Int 1664 - In relation to requiring the office of food policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan.

Int 1666 - In relation to the establishment of an office of food policy.

Submitted by:

American Heart Association, Robin Vitale, Vice President, Health Strategies, New York City and Greater New York

September 18, 2019

Members of the Committee on Economic Development, Education and General Welfare:

On behalf of the American Heart Association, allow me to emphasize our gratitude for the leadership of Council Speaker Corey Johnson and the many Council Members who are now steering the conversation relative to the city's food system. For at least a decade, efforts have been waged to address the needed evolution of this system. Yet, barriers to affordable, healthy food persist. We are excited for this opportunity to reset the conversation and consider how the city's food system should ideally operate. Access to affordable, healthy food should be a human right. This is a social justice issue, and we look forward to working with the Council and Administration on these next steps.

The American Heart Association is our nation's largest, voluntary-led, science-based organization focused on being a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. This mission is what motivates us to address Council today, and coincides wonderfully with the ambitious outline of the *Growing Food Equity in New York City* proposals. Approximately 80% of diagnoses involving heart disease and stroke could be prevented if Americans were able to improve their

lifestyles and adopt healthier behaviors.¹ By enhancing our support of low-income communities, youth, seniors and other marginalized populations, we can steadily address the food-related systems, environmental restrictions and policies that impede New Yorkers from being able to prioritize their health.

The American Heart Association supports the intention behind this comprehensive suite of proposals. While our expertise does not touch upon all topics, we value the scope of NYC's food system and the potential benefits derived by casting a wide net on potential opportunities for improvement. Many of our partners in the Healthy Food Retail Action Network (HFRAN) are here to testify in support of various elements of the bill package. We applaud their work in urban agriculture, hunger, food security, food waste and other topics. As HFRAN is focused on the support of our city's food retailers, this is an opportunity to encourage the Council leadership to devote consideration for our city's current or prospective business owners who have the potential to serve a vital lifeline for many communities. While FRESH is referenced in the report, the city has an opportunity to not only improve this existing program but expand beyond it. HFRAN looks forward to supporting this additional aspect of your efforts.

For the purpose of our testimony today, I will prioritize two general topics found within the report – SNAP support and Food Governance.

Hunger (SNAP)

SNAP protects children, families and our seniors who are struggling to afford food by reducing food insecurity. Nearly two-thirds of all SNAP participants are children, elderly, and people with disabilities.

Despite significant evidence to support SNAP expansion², eligible participants are often faced with stigma, fear or confusion and other barriers to enrollment. The American Heart Association strongly supports Council efforts to promote access to SNAP for all populations who can benefit.

Additionally, SNAP participants who receive added financial incentives to purchase more fruits and vegetables, actually eat more fruits and vegetables, spend more of these SNAP benefits on healthy foods, and eat more of them even when incentives are no longer available. By expanding financial incentives to encourage SNAP participants to purchase more fruits and vegetables, families will have greater access to healthier foods and local economies will be stronger. The city's Health Bucks program has a wealth of evidence to support its impact locally.³ And we encourage Council's efforts to broaden the program's reach.

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/HeartDisease-Stroke/index.html>

² Executive Office of the President of the United States. Long-term benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. December 2015.
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/SNAP_report_final_nonembargo.pdf/.

³ <https://snapedtoolkit.org/interventions/programs/health-bucks/>

As the Council considers its budget priorities for FY 21, the American Heart Association looks forward to continued strategies to expand Health Bucks beyond its current scope. With 1.8 million current SNAP enrollees, a fully funded Health Bucks program – which for the American Heart Association would mean providing just one voucher to every SNAP participant per month – would cost nearly \$108 million. With limited investment from the city at the moment, there is significant room to improve financial support of the program. Additional benefit would be achieved in making sure vouchers are able to be utilized year-round in all boroughs, a current limitation with no farmers markets available in the Bronx during the winter months.

Food Governance

The Office of Food Policy has been a long-standing ally to many organizations as our coalition sought to improve the complex food system in NYC. However, their scope and influence has been unfortunately limited despite the significant responsibility of their work. The American Heart Association strongly supports the empowerment of this office and looks forward to the Council's efforts to strengthen its resources as a lead force for the city's food plan and expanded Food Metrics report.

Additionally, with recent staff transitions in mind, it's equally imperative that the Office of Food Policy is buffered by a broad group of community-focused advocates who together may provide additional insight and clarity for the city's food plan and related strategies. An independent Food Policy Council can serve as a much-needed resource to gather community input to further enhance the city's food system needs.

New York City maintains the largest, and arguably most complex food system in the country. Yet there is a robust collection of stakeholders and advocates who stand ready to support this movement to support a just, equitable and healthy city. The American Heart Association is focused on a vision of what New York City should be – a place where healthy options are always available, in all neighborhoods, for all individuals. We look forward to working with Speaker Johnson and the leadership from these committees to achieve this goal.

Good afternoon, Chair Levin (Vallone, Treyger) and members of the Committee on General Welfare (Economic Development, Education). My name is Allyson Gatto, and I am a student at the CUNY School of Public Health. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

As I'm sure most of you know, the aging population throughout the United States is steadily growing. In New York City, the number of adults over the age of 60 is expected to rise from 1.6 million to 1.8 million in the next 20 years.¹ Between 2015 and 2017, 10.9% of this population living in food insecure households.² Older adults who face food insecurity are 78% more likely to experience depression; 40% more likely to experience chest pain; and 55% more likely to have asthma.³ These individuals also have higher rates of chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, and score lower on physical and mental health exams.⁴

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is crucial in reducing food insecurity. Receiving SNAP benefits can lead to a stabilization of household finances which gives individuals the ability to spend their income on other necessities.⁵ This is extremely important for older adults, many of whom have to choose between spending their money on food, or spending their money on medications, health care, and rent. Unfortunately, while the number of older adults participating in SNAP grew by 12% between 2012 and 2016, only 71% (331,000) of the eligible older adult population are enrolled.^{5,6} There are a number of barriers to enrollment, including a lack of mobility, limited access to transportation, a lack of knowledge about the program, and the fact that many individuals believe there is a stigma surrounding enrollment in "welfare" programs. As a result of these barriers, many older adults are forced to limit themselves to only one or two meals per day. I previously worked at a nursing home and rehabilitation center, and many of my residents were thankful to be there because they were not used to being able to eat a full three meals a day.

Coordination between the Department of Social Services and Department for the Aging will facilitate increased enrollment and recertification in SNAP by older adults. By disassembling the barriers to enrollment and recertification, and identifying those that are eligible but not enrolled, the legislation will ensure that seniors are getting the assistance and support that they need and deserve. This will decrease the need of older adults to choose between necessities, and lead to better health outcomes. Beyond the health benefits, enrolling seniors in SNAP could save New York State up to \$702 million in health care costs by reducing nursing home, hospital, and emergency department use.⁷ This amounts to about \$2,100 in savings per senior enrolled, which could result in more than \$100 million dollars in savings in the City.

¹ Johnson C. Growing Food Equity in New York City: A City Council Agenda. <http://council.nyc.gov/data/wp-content/uploads/sites/73/2019/08/growing-food-equity-1.pdf>. Published August, 2019. Accessed September 12, 2019

² Hunger Free America. The uneaten big apple: Hunger's high cost in NYC. 2018. 1-35. 1-123.

³ Ziliak JP, Gunderson C. The health consequences of senior hunger in the United States: Evidence from the 1990-2014 NHANES. 2017. 1-73.

⁴ Strickhouser S, Wright JD, Donley AM. Food insecurity among older adults: A report submitted to AARP foundation. September 2014.

⁵ Hunger Free America. SNAP declines yet hunger persists: NYC caseloads 2012-2016 and the need to ease access to benefits. <https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Declining%20SNAP%20Participation%20Report%20June%202018.pdf>. Published June 2018. Accessed September 15, 2019.

⁶ New York City Food Policy. 2018 Food Metrics Report. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/foodpolicy/downloads/pdf/2018-Food-Metrics-Report.pdf>. Published 2018. Accessed September 12, 2018.

⁷ Zielinski G, Samuel L, Szanton S, Betley C, Cahill R. Policy research brief: Access to public benefits among dual eligible seniors reduces risk of nursing home and hospital admission and cuts costs. 2018. 1-8.

Additionally, each SNAP dollar spent generates \$1.79 in economic activity.⁵ Current SNAP spending amounts to \$5 billion in economic benefits in New York City, which would be increased through additional enrollment.⁵ Therefore, this law has the potential to not only benefit the older adults who are enrolled in SNAP, but also the City and State as a whole.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today. I would be happy to try and answers any questions you may have for me.

Testimony Submitted by
Joshua Delgado, Messiah Timmons, Fresh Food Box Youth Leaders, Teens for Food Justice
Before The New York City Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on
Education and Committee on General Welfare

Joint Meeting on Growing Food Equity Bills
September 18, 2019

My name is Messiah Timmons and my colleague's name is Joshua Delgado. We are former DeWitt Clinton HS student farmers and now we're Fresh Food Box Interns at Teens for Food Justice. Thank you to the members of the City Council Committees on Economic Development, Education and General Welfare for holding today's hearing on legislation to advance food equity in New York City.

TFFJ works in schools in food desert communities like our former high school, DeWitt Clinton, to train students to build and maintain indoor hydroponic farms that can grow thousands of pounds of fresh produce per year. As TFFJ Food Box Interns, we work with current DeWitt Clinton students to run a Fresh Food Box program in the lobby of our school.

Our Fresh Food Box, which costs just \$14 and customers can purchase using SNAP, includes a big selection of produce grown in the DeWitt Clinton hydroponic farm and sourced from local farmers. We also lead cooking demonstrations, offer healthy food tastings and share what TFFJ has taught us about improving nutrition and health with customers. This program is bringing both good quality food and education to our community.

Because of our work with TFFJ and the hydroponic farm, students at the DeWitt Clinton campus have learned a lot about food insecurity and the importance of advocating for food equity for all New Yorkers. Today, Messiah and I are here to support the various food equity bills before your committees, and to speak specifically to bills **1654**, **1663**, and **1676**.

Int. 1654: In relation to neighborhood awareness campaigns regarding farm-to-city projects.

The "Farm-to-City" website created by Speaker Johnson's office is a valuable centralized resource for many programs being offered by community-based organizations around the city, and connecting low-income individuals with sources of fresh, locally grown healthy food. We believe a public awareness campaign to promote this resource could help more New Yorkers in need of these vital programs. We support the passage of Int. 1654 with the following amendments:

- Add School Gardens, Urban Farms, and Community Gardens in the definition of "farm-to-city projects" outlined in the bill. It is useful for community members to know about the existence and location of these programs. Every Thursday we distribute fresh nutritious food that was grown and harvested in our former high school by our peers as part of our Fresh Food Box Program. By adding school farms like ours, but also urban farms and community gardens into the definition of "farm-to-city" projects, we would be

better able to get the word out about resources that are hyper-local and come directly from the communities most affected by food insecurity.

- Create one centralized hub for farm-to-city projects to be promoted through public awareness campaigns.
- Add language to ensure the department consults with the community-based organizations managing and running projects included in the awareness campaign around messaging and strategies to promote the campaign in neighborhoods and community districts.

Int. 1663: In relation to establishing an office of urban agriculture and an urban agriculture advisory board.

Urban agriculture has a significant role to play in improving access to healthy food, health outcomes, food literacy, workforce development and food sovereignty in low-income communities across New York. Int. 1663 is an important step forward in respecting and supporting the gardeners, farmers and organizations that have been leading this work in New York City for decades. In the Bronx, we have been able to provide a daily source of fresh nutritious leafy greens, herbs and cucumbers to DeWitt Clinton High School's cafeteria on a daily basis, improving the health and nutritional value of what is available to students at lunch.

Ensuring NYC's Urban Agriculture Plan is Equitable and Inclusive

Teens for Food Justice believes the people most impacted by an issue are the best suited to address it and should be meaningfully engaged in the policymaking process. Community and nonprofit leaders, diverse families, advocates and others should be engaged to ensure that the city's Urban Agriculture plan effectively meets the unique needs of the community. This responsibility should not be taken lightly and requires intentional commitment and explicit work on a regular and ongoing basis.

Int. 1676: In relation to requiring the department of education to report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service.

Many children live in households with limited access to fresh, healthy, and high quality, nutrient-rich food options. School meal programs can provide children, especially those vulnerable to hunger and diet-related disease, with access to healthier foods. According to Edible Schoolyard NYC, 94% of NYC Children don't eat enough vegetables and over 40% of New York City public school children are obese or overweight. Cooking food from scratch in schools is a proven effective strategy for increasing the amount of fresh, healthy produce and wholesome food consumed by children.

Scratch-cooked school food is also very useful for reducing food waste. As former students, we watched first-hand as many students threw away most of the food that was on their lunch trays. We also saw how eager students are to eat lunch when they knew it was a day that we were being served cooked meals, and I was particularly excited when it was whole grain pasta or a meal that had produce from our farm upstairs substituted in. For these reasons, we support the passage of Int. 1676.

Good afternoon chairs Vallone, Treyger, and Levin, and fellow City Council members.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify here today.

My name is Barbara Hughes and I am Executive Director of City Beet Kitchens, a social purpose catering company run by the New York City homeless services nonprofit agency Project Renewal.

For more than 52 years, Project Renewal has empowered individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk to renew their lives through critical programs focused on health, homes, and jobs.

We offer the most comprehensive services to homeless New Yorkers, serving nearly 15,000 people each year, including adults, children, seniors, veterans, and LGBTQ young adults.

Project Renewal's hallmark workforce development program is our Culinary Arts Training Program, which receives critical funding from the City Council—and we are very grateful for that.

Since 1995, the program has prepared unemployed, homeless and at-risk New Yorkers for careers in restaurants, corporate dining, and institutional catering. We have placed more than 1,300 graduates in food industry jobs. Our 80% job placement rate is double the national average for similar programs.

In 1997 we started City Beet Kitchens to create even more jobs for our graduates, to feed New Yorkers in need, and to generate revenue for Project Renewal's homeless services.

We transform the lives of New Yorkers like Eric, a veteran and one of 24 Culinary Arts Training Program graduates currently employed at City Beets Kitchens. We have helped Eric overcome many obstacles, including incarceration. Today, he is thriving—doing a job he loves, living independently, and taking college classes toward a degree in hospitality management.

In addition to catering events and meetings, City Beet Kitchens serves 2.6 million meals each year at shelters, supportive housing, and senior centers across the city. That makes Project Renewal the city's largest provider of meals to New Yorkers in need.

At Project Renewal, nutrition, sustainability, and reducing food waste are priorities. We have a greenhouse at our culinary program site where students harvest fresh vegetables and herbs for their cooking.

Our new Bedford Green House supportive and affordable housing development in the Bronx will feature an aquaponics greenhouse where residents can raise nutritious vegetables and fish. We will also have on-site nutrition classes.

Today, Project Renewal strongly urges the City to create an office of food policy. Reducing waste and ensuring all New Yorkers have access to healthy food are big challenges—and we need big plans to address them. That’s why we need permanent food governance, now.

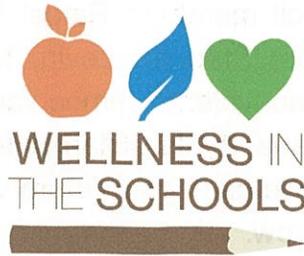
An office of food policy could provide us with expert guidance and resources, so that we can expand our work and develop new programs.

For example, we are exploring a food-as-medicine program at our shelters, where we could provide nutritional counselling and resources to clients at risk of diseases related to poor diet. We also want to create salad bars at our shelters and educate clients on how and why to use them, and incorporate more nutritional education into our programs.

In addition, Project Renewal supports Council Member Rivera’s bill focused on food waste. At a special track of our Culinary Arts Training Program that serves youth, we partner with a Trader Joe’s which sends us produce for our students to use in class and even take home to their families. Council Member Rivera’s bill would bring similar benefits to many more New Yorkers in need.

In closing, I applaud the City Council’s leadership on food policy, food governance, and ending hunger.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I’m happy to answer any questions.



TESTIMONY BEFORE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

Joint Meeting of the Education, General Welfare,
and Economic Development Committees

September 18th, 2019

My name is Deborah Soffel. I am a Chef, a NYC public school mother, and NYC Program Director at Wellness in the Schools (WITS); the nonprofit organization that teaches kids healthy habits to learn and live better. We partner with public schools to provide nutrition and fitness education, healthy scratch-cooked meals and active recess periods.

We are advocating for four policy changes which would ensure that the DOE (1) moves away from serving children highly-processed meals and instead prepares scratch-cooked meals, (2) brings nutrition and food education to every grade beginning in Pre-K, (3) plants culinary gardens at every school and (4) increases the duration that all children have to eat their lunches and play at recess to one full hour.

Since 2005, WITS has been fighting childhood obesity in NYC schools. We were founded by our Executive Director, Nancy Easton, who as a former public school principal, witnessed first hand the extreme, negative effects that unhealthy eating and lack of physical fitness were having on students' ability to succeed academically and emotionally.

This is why I am here today representing my fellow Wellness in the Schools Chefs, led by Chef and restaurateur Bill Telepan, in favor of Speaker Corey Johnson's Growing Equity in New York City food policy agenda.

The policies contained in the 16 bills we heard today will change the way children are fed for generations, and how they learn about food and nutrition, forming healthy habits for a lifetime. We are in the beginning stages, but with the Speaker's vision,

passionately supported by council members Rafael Espinal, Helen Rosenthal, Mark Treyger, Mark Levine, Ben Kallos, Stephen Levin, Margarte Chin, Andrew Cohen, Vanessa Gibson, Carlina Rivera, Paul Valone, James Van Bramer, Farrah Louis, Deborah Rose, Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Diana Ayala. Thanks to all of you, who fight for our children every day in your work. We can see a future where schools become healthier places for students to learn and grow.

While I support all of the bills in Speaker Johnson's Growing Food Equity plan, my testimony will focus on Int. 1676, requiring the DOE to come up with a scratch cooking implementation plan.

This bill is critical to prioritizing the health of our children. Nearly one-third of children and youth in the state of New York are obese or overweight. We know that heat and serve, processed foods - served at fast food establishments and in schools - is changing our children's palettes and their metabolic systems, fueling this obesity crisis.

I have been working in NYC public school kitchen for 10 years, since I began working at Wellness in the Schools. And, I am here to tell you that this is possible. I work daily with school cooks who have the interest and the drive. It will take training, equipment, and access to local vendors. It will take educators to provide the learning tools that allow students to develop the skills they need to make healthy choices for themselves. I know it can be done.

I have witnessed parental support for scratch-cooked meals, nutrition and food education, school gardens, and daily physical exercise. Every parent wants their children to be happy, healthy, and to have a bright future. We need to show our school communities that we stand by whatever it takes to ensure fresh food access to every child.

Let's feed all kids real food. It takes strategy and vision, both of which are codified by this bill. Together we can make NYC schools healthier places for students to learn and grow.

Thank you.

Deborah Soffel
NYC Program Director at Wellness in the Schools



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September 18, 2019

RE: Int 1660 - In relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program.

The Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) is a bi-national coalition of 31 worker-based organizations in the food economy, collectively representing more than 375,000 workers. Our members work to improve wages and working conditions along the food chain through organizing and policy innovations such as the Good Food Purchasing Program.

The Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) is the leading national food procurement model. It provides a metric-based, flexible framework and a set of tools to create greater transparency and accountability in public food procurement and encourages large public institutions to direct their buying power toward five core values – **local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, nutritional health, and animal welfare.**

The Alliance helped develop the GFPP and now provides direct support to community leaders working with their local institutions to adopt GFPP in cities and counties around the country. First adopted by the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District in 2012, GFPP is currently operating in 32 institutions in 15 cities with more than \$1 billion in aggregate food purchasing.

This Program has been a strong tool for large public institutions to support justice for food workers. Since its adoption in LA nearly 400 workers in Los Angeles County now have higher wages, better health benefits, and stronger workplace protections. Furthermore, adoption of GFPP Standards has given the LA Unified School District the tools to:

- Direct about \$30 million annually to local food purchases including 45 million servings of bread and rolls made from sustainably and locally grown wheat—with a projected benefit of between \$48 and \$94 million to the local economy;
- Create more than 220 well-paying jobs in the food chain;
- Reduce purchases of industrially produced meat by nearly a third, with substantial decreases in the district's carbon footprint and water usage; and
- Shift US poultry production through the negotiation of new contracts of up to \$50 million for sustainably raised chicken.

Our experience tells us that communities want greater transparency in food sourcing practices and the Good Food Purchasing Program will enable buying power to provide that transparency, while also transforming our food systems and address systemic inequities.

Our experience also tells us that the key linchpins in the success of GFPP has been policy adoption which allows our public institutions to commit to ongoing participation regardless of if/when leadership changes and participation from community stakeholders in adoption and implementation.

We put our support behind efforts to adopt GFPP into the NYC administrative code with Bill 1660. Our coalition has submitted some important and meaningful additions to the bill language that I hope will be carefully considered.

We also want to thank Councilman Andrew Cohen and Council Speaker Corey Johnson for their leadership in these efforts. We also thank the members of this committee.

*Members: Brandworkers International * Burgerville Workers Union * California Institute for Rural Studies * Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center * Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas * Community to Community Development * Familias Unidas por La Justicia * Farmworker Association of Florida * Fair World Project * Fédération du Commerce * International Labor Rights Forum * Justicia for Migrant Workers * Laundry Workers Center * Migrant Justice * Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights * Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center * Organization United for Respect * Pioneer Valley Workers Center * Restaurant Opportunities Centers United * Retail Wholesale Department Store Union * Rural Community Workers Alliance * Rural & Migrant Ministry * Street Vendors Association of Chicago * Street Vendors Project * Teamsters Joint Council No. 7 * Teamsters Local 63 * UNITE HERE Food Services Division * United Food & Commercial Workers Local 770 * Warehouse Workers for Justice * Warehouse Worker Resource Center * Workers Center of Central New York * Workers Justice Center of New York*



FOR THE RECORD

Joint Meeting on Growing Food Equity Bills
September 18, 2019

**The New York City Council Committees on
Economic Development, Education and General Welfare**

**Testimony Submitted by Charmaine Ruddock, Project Director
Bronx Health REACH / Institute for Family Health
(212) 633-0800 x1291
cruddock@institute.org**

My name is Charmaine Ruddock and I am the Project Director of Bronx Health REACH at the Institute for Family Health. Thank you to Chairpersons Paul Vallone, Mark Treyger and Steven T. Levin as well as the members of the City Council Committees on Economic Development, Education and General Welfare for holding today's joint hearing on legislation to advance food equity in New York City.

Bronx Health REACH (BHR) is a coalition of more than 80 community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, health care providers, schools, small business groups, housing and social service agencies that work to address racial and ethnic health disparities. We are a grantee of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) initiative whose goal is to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities with affected communities leading the effort. It is the only federal program of its kind. The Bronx Health Coalition led by the Institute for Family Health, a network of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), has focused its efforts to eliminate disparities through health promotion activities directed towards increasing access to healthier foods, nutrition education, and opportunities to engage in safe, fun physical activities. The Coalition also works to address social determinants of health and the root causes of disparities through policy, systems, environment and infrastructure changes.

Currently, Bronx Health REACH is a leader of the Bronx Bodega Partners Workgroup, a multi-sector coalition of non-profit organizations dedicated to increasing the availability, affordability, and demand for, fresh, affordable, healthy food options at bodegas in all Bronx neighborhoods. The Bronx Bodega Partners Workgroup collectively work with 54 stores in the Bronx, helping them to procure, sell, and market healthier food and beverage options. Bronx Health REACH is also a member of the Healthy Food Retail Action Network, a coalition of organizations dedicated to improving healthy food retail options and advocating for those food retail businesses in New York City.

The Bronx Health REACH Coalition is supportive of the bills being considered in today's hearing and appreciative of the Council's attention to building an equitable food system for all New Yorkers. Health Bucks, addressed in Int 1650, are a valuable way of increasing affordability of fresh, healthy, locally grown foods. However, we are disappointed that there is no discussion of policies that support increasing access to affordable healthy foods and beverages in bodegas or corner stores. Bodegas are ubiquitous in the Bronx especially in low-



income communities of color such as the south Bronx where health disparities are greatest and access to fruits and vegetables is limited. According to a 2014 report by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on the food environment of the Crotona-Tremont neighborhood of the South Bronx, 77% of the food retail stores in this neighborhood were bodegas (NYC DOHMH Epi Data Report: Describing the Food Environment in the South Bronx Neighborhood of Crotona-Tremont, April 2014). Residents in these communities visit these stores frequently.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Ranking Report, the Bronx has been ranked 62 out of New York State's 62 counties in health outcomes and health factors for the past 9 years. Access to fresh, affordable, healthy food and beverages is a major barrier to living a healthy lifestyle in the borough, where 32% of residents are obese, 36% have hypertension, 16% are diagnosed with diabetes, and almost 18% had no servings of fruits or vegetables the previous day (NYC DOHMH Community Health Survey 2017).

The food system of the South Bronx and other poor communities like it in the Bronx and across New York State have been aptly termed "food apartheid." While great efforts have been made to increase the number of farmers markets and fresh food box programs, improve supermarkets, and other programs that increase access to healthy, affordable foods and beverages, the reality is that many Bronx residents continue to not have these resources in their communities and/or the food is unaffordable.

Bodegas are an important part of New York City's food system as there are over 12,000 bodegas in the city. Advancing food equity in New York City must incorporate bills that aim to increase access to and reduce the price of healthy food and beverages in bodegas where many members of our community shop for snacks, drinks, and made to order items. We recommend that future City Council bills address consumer demand and access as it is our experience that you cannot make an impact in improving health outcomes in the South Bronx without both. Many bodega owners are interested in offering healthy food options in their stores; however, they cannot sell the products if no one buys them. Conversely, many residents want to purchase healthier food and beverage options, but either the food is not available in their communities or it is too expensive. Below are a few ideas from our Coalition and Bronx Bodega Partners Workgroup for how to achieve these goals:

- Support community-led, multi-lingual marketing campaigns such as the Don't Stress, Eat Fresh Bronx Bodega Marketing Campaign developed by community groups and the Bronx Bodega Partners Workgroup that promote healthy food options sold in bodegas;
- Eliminate marketing of unhealthy foods at bodegas;
- Develop a pilot program in the Bronx that provides financial incentives for bodega customers to purchase healthier foods and beverages
- Expand the FRESH initiative to include bodegas

Increasing access to affordable, healthy foods and beverages at bodegas is an integral component of food equity and should be included as part of the greater food policy conversation. While we hope the programs we recommend above are implemented soon, they could be included in the



10-year food policy plan discussed in Int 1654, which requires the Office of Food Policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan.

Finally, as a grantee of the New York State Department of Health’s Creating Healthy Schools and Communities program, we know how important it is for children to be educated about nutrition and food, including having opportunities to taste fresh, healthy food in schools, in order to make informed consumer decisions. Therefore, in regards to Int 1676, requiring the NYC Department of Education to report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service, we believe that the bill language should be clarified to include the following: create “an implementation plan to ensure that every school child has access to scratch-cooked, healthy, delicious, and culturally-appropriate menu items;” identify “barriers to” the department’s ability to implement a city-wide scratch-cooked food service program that incorporates culturally appropriate meals and age-appropriate “food and nutrition education;” “and suggest potential ways to overcome these barriers.”

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with the City Council to make sure healthy, affordable options are available at bodegas in the future.



FOR THE RECORD

New York City Board of Education Employees
85 Broad Street, 16th Flr., New York, N.Y. 10004 - (212)815-1372 - www.local372.org
Affiliated with District Council 37, American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

**TESTIMONY OF LOCAL 372, NYC BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES
BEFORE
THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND
COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE**

**SEPTEMBER 18, 2019, 1:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
NEW YORK CITY**

Chairs Treyger, Vallone, and Levin, and honorable members of the Committee on Education, the Committee on Economic Development, and Committee on General Welfare, good afternoon. I am Shaun D. Francois I, President of Local 372, NYC Board of Education Employees; District Council 37 | AFSCME, and I present this testimony on behalf of the 24,000 non-pedagogical New York City Board of Education Employees that make up Local 372 who perform essential support services to help the 1.2 million public school children of New York City be learning-ready. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at this important hearing. Specifically, I am here to discuss proposed legislation on today's agenda which impacts the role and responsibilities for the many school lunch workers represented by Local 372.

First and foremost: children need to eat in order to concentrate and learn in the classroom. That is why the school lunch workers we represent unload, prepare, and serve food to the City's 1.2 million

school children each day, including during the summer. In addition to preparing daily lunches, these employees also work hard to serve breakfasts first thing in the morning through the “Breakfast in the Classroom” program, and all of the food we prepare and serve must fit into federal nutritional standards and guidelines. Local 372 is extremely supportive of the City’s breakfast and lunch programs throughout the year – every child deserves to come to class and return home with a full stomach.

With this in mind, I turn first towards Int. 1675, introduced by Council Members Rose, Kallos, Chin, and Ayala. Int. 1675 would require the Department of Education to mail information about summer meals to the home address of every student eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program. Local 372 supports the summer meals program – just because classes are out for the summer does not eliminate our responsibility to feed children who would otherwise go hungry. Any one child missing meals despite their eligibility, simply because their family was uninformed of their options, is one child too many. Likewise, the Department of Education should make every effort to distribute information to eligible students’ families to inform them that meals are available and where to find them. Local 372 is thus fully supportive of Int. 1675.

Next, I now turn towards Int. 1676, introduced by Council Members Rosenthal, Kallos, and Ayala. Int. 1676 would require the Department of Education to report on ongoing efforts to implement scratch-cooked school food service in schools, as well as related nutrition and health programming. Scratch cooking, prioritizing the preparation of meals or snacks on a daily basis at or near the site of consumption with ingredients in their most basic form, is demanding work – made all the more difficult by inadequate staffing mandates from the Department of Education’s Office of SchoolFood that spread school lunch employees too thin between breakfast and lunch programs. Insufficient staffing levels place additional strain on workers, who are coming in earlier and staying later without extra compensation in order to simply make sure food is ready to feed all 1.2 million children when that bell rings.

Local 372 supports the scratch-cooked food program: in addition to a healthier option for our children, school lunch workers receive extra training and compensation. However, given the existing strain on staffing

and the toll it takes on school lunch workers, Local 372 supports a reporting of the program as required Int. 1676. We are eager to see the Department of Education review whether the program is working as intended, and Local 372 respectfully requests an opportunity to review any data available to the Department or the Sponsors regarding the scratch-cooking program's impact on school lunch workers and kitchen staffing needs.

Finally, I turn to Int. 1681, introduced by Council Members Van Bramer, Kallos, and Ayala. Int. 1681 would require the Department of Education to work with school sustainability coordinators to develop a plan for reducing food waste. Local 372 supports any effort to reduce food waste as it is simply a tragedy that any food prepared for hungry children ends up instead in a garbage bin, uneaten. However, this legislation leaves it to the Department to work out the finer details of a plan, including who will undertake additional responsibilities during implementation. As previously mentioned, school lunch workers are already spread too thin as it is due to insufficient staffing levels. While Local 372 supports the Sponsors' goal, we cannot support an increase in responsibilities for school lunch workers without additional staffing to alleviate the burden. To that end, Local 372 requests that any eventual plan to reduce food waste under Int. 1681 not impose additional responsibilities on school lunch workers, and that any plan which mandates new responsibilities also include a corollary mandate to increase kitchen staffing levels.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Local 372 and our school lunch workers on these important bills. I am happy to answer any questions the Committees may have.



September 18, 2019

My name is Wendy O'Shields I am an Advocate in the City of New York and the Co-Founder of the Urban Justice Center Safety Net Activists. I support Int bills 1650, 1652, 1653, 1654, 1659, 1660, 1663, 1664, 1666, 1673, 1675, 1676, 1680, and 1681. Additionally I am in favor of New York State Resolutions 1024 and 1025, which will expand the SNAP audience to many that have suffered nutritional deficient for decades.

Int 1650 the farmers markets, SNAP, Health Bucks, and Pharmacy to Farm Prescriptions should be heavily promoted in advertising in subways, buses, and flyers distributed at NYC HRA SNAP centers. Currently for every \$5.00 of SNAP purchases at the farmers markets there is a \$2.00 Health Bucks coupon redeemed. I suggestion the City should match the coupon amount 1 to 1 to invest in your fellow New Yorkers better health! The Pharmacy to Farm Prescriptions program is a lesser-known SNAP benefit, which provides a \$30.00 Health Bucks coupon to recipients that have high blood pressure. With more New Yorkers being able to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains their general health will improve.

Is there a way to automate the enrollment of eligible low-income seniors into SNAP benefits? Is there a way to automated the children's summer meals program for eligible pupils? Proving food resources automatically too many low-income reduces the social stigma some people contemplate with social programs. May proud people suffer with hunger behind closed doors.

Int 1652 community gardens should be protected as greenspace and agribusinesses, which are owned by the neighborhoods. Neighbors should purchase what is grown onsite at a significant discount to encourage healthy eating. Urban farming is a way to nurture and train young gardeners in planning, small business, and providing fresh produce to their community.

Int 1664 and 1666 the establishment of the Office of Food Policy and a 10-year plan to nourish low-income people in the City is much overdue.

Res 1024 to assist public college students to receive SNAP benefits while attending college is very necessary to support the young adults while they complete the degrees. The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) would be providing food security for our future leaders.

Res 1025 – Albany with many constituents living Homeless in shelters or the Streets for 3, 5, or 7 years, the disabled often not able to cook, and elderly usually living single... the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program would allow these populations to have access to hot meals. By spending their SNAP benefit in the local economy at grocery stores, delis, and restaurants will circulate.

I thank you for considering my suggestions to improve service delivery and customer service at the City of New York Human Resource Center Job Centers.

Wendy O'Shields, Independent Advocate, Safety Net Activists Co-Founder



Testimony of Brighter Bites
on
The Establishment of an Office of Food Policy in the City of New York

Presented before

The New York City Council, Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Education,
and Committee on General Welfare

Melanie Button, Program Director
Brighter Bites

September 18, 2019

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Hello,

My name is Melanie Button and I am the New York Program Director for Brighter Bites. I would like to thank Speaker Johnson, as well as the Committees on Economic Development, Education, and General Welfare for the invitation to testify today in support of an Office for Food Policy in the City of New York.

Despite New York's status as one of the richest cities in the world, more than one million of our residents are considered to be food insecure, and hundreds of thousands more live in food deserts or food swamps. I am proud to testify before you in support of these bills aimed at addressing food inequities in New York City, and be part of a historic initiative to ensure access to healthy food should not be determined by income.

The organization I'm representing today, Brighter Bites, is a nonprofit with the mission of creating communities of health through fresh food. We run a research-based and collaborative program that delivers fruits and vegetables directly into underserved families' hands, teaches them how to use it, and tracks their behavior change. Our ultimate goal is to change behavior among children and their families to prevent obesity and achieve long-term health.

Alongside our research partners, Brighter Bites studies every family that participates in the program, and our data shows that we are making a demonstrable impact on the school and home environments. Over the 2018-2019 school year, 98% of Brighter Bites parents reported that their family ate more fruits and vegetables while participating in the program, and of those, 96% said they were able to maintain that increased level of consumption after the program ended.

Research shows that children who participate in Brighter Bites consume more fruits and vegetables served at school lunches than children who are not enrolled in the program, and that we are increasing parent involvement in schools.

Brighter Bites is one of several community-based organizations in New York City doing the critical work transforming our city's food system, and turning the Council's vision of food justice into a reality for thousands of New Yorkers. However, without a unified, comprehensive plan for food governance, gaps in the system remain and impact of initiatives like Brighter Bites is confined by competition for limited resources.

Brighter Bites launched in New York City in 2017, serving approximately 250 families at two summer sites. Since then, together with our key program partners City Harvest and D'Arrigo Bros. of New York, we have grown to serve approximately 1000 families at five elementary schools. We were recently co-awarded SNAP-Ed funding, which will allow us to double our footprint this school to serving 3000+ families at 10 elementary schools and two summer sites in Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan.

Looking ahead to 2022, Brighter Bites plans to expand to 20 schools and six summer sites across Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and the Bronx, translating to nearly 2 million pounds of fresh produce and 10,000s of nutrition touchpoints annually.

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I appreciate the opportunity to tell you about Brighter Bites and the impact we are having in New York. I would like to thank Speaker Johnson and the Council for taking a bold and comprehensive approach to improving nutrition and access to healthy foods. The purposeful and innovative policies introduced today are important steps forward in reducing food insecurity and diet-related diseases.

Brighter Bites believes that an expanded and empowered Office of Food Policy is the path towards setting a sustainable and strategic food policy plan for the city, that encompasses nutrition education initiatives like ours, and I appreciate the time you've given me today to testify on behalf of Int. 1666.

Thank you for your time.

About Brighter Bites

Brighter Bites is a national nonprofit whose mission is to create communities of health through fresh food. We deliver fruits and vegetables directly into families' hands, we teach them how to use it and we track their behavior change. We make it fun. We make it free. And, we make it happen via a simple, replicable formula: Produce Distribution + Nutrition Education + Fun Food Experience.

Brighter Bites launched in Houston in 2012, serving 150 families in one school. Since then, we have grown our presence to six cities in four states (Texas, New York, Maryland/Washington, D.C, and Florida), and with our partners have enrolled more than 53,000 families in the program. During this time, Brighter Bites has proven that its scalable and easily replicable program improves and sustains consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and creates systemic change: from growing demand for purchasing more produce, to changing the school and home environments, all in an effort to empower families to achieve better health. Since 2012, Brighter Bites has delivered more than 23 million pounds of fresh produce and 100,000s of nutrition education materials to over 275,000 individuals at more than 240 sites across the U.S.

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To: The New York City Council

Re: Res. 1024-2019

I am here to support resolution 1024. I wish to advocate for its modification to expand its eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to all low-income college students regardless of the college they are attending.

I understand that immigrants and low-income students often attend public colleges. However, we ought not forget that some of these students attend private colleges as well and they also face food insecurity.

I graduated from Brooklyn College in 2012, as a student there I experienced food insecurity. In 2016, I turned down my acceptance to the Global Public Health program at NYU because I knew I could not afford tuition, housing expenses, and food, thus I knew I will not be able to complete the program, thank goodness to CUNY, I was able to complete my bachelor and now I am pursuing a Master in Public Health (MPH).

I strongly believe that access to food should be given to all low-income college students in New York City.

Thank you,

Edwina Luc, CHES, MPH candidate
luc.edwina@gmail.com

Memorandum

To: New York City Council, Committee of Economic Development

From: Lissette Rubio, CUNY School of Public Health

Date: September 18, 2019

Re: Int 1675-2019 Distribution of Information Regarding Summer Meals

Coming from a working class family this bill immediately stood out to me. As a child, my parents were always at work. When my siblings and I weren't at school, we'd be at our babysitter's house waiting for one of our parents to pick us up and take us home, those days always seemed to be the longest. Unfortunately, my parents didn't have any other option but to work endless hours a day to make ends meet. Additionally, at the time my parents had applied for naturalization - another stressful factor. After years of hard work, they are now U.S Citizens and are finally able to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

I share this background story with the intent to tie it into this wonderfully proposed bill. As parents to three children, they struggled a lot and it is my belief that had they been aware of these available resources they would have been so appreciative of receiving assistance, especially to feed their children. My parents as well as other parents would have struggled a bit less.

When my time came to apply for college, I was fortunate enough to have an older sibling who had heard about financial aid/FAFSA. I applied and became eligible for government assistance. I am so grateful for that and I know it helped both my parents and I. Fast forward 10 years later, I have a career and am now able to take care of my parents upon their retirement.

The point I am trying to illustrate is that my parents never knew or learned about the many different resources that are out there to help working class citizens and it is so unfortunate. I believe this is the case for many other families. This bill would help to spread awareness to families who are eligible and to learn about assistance that is made available for their children. I am 100% for this bill.

Sincerely,

Lissette Rubio



THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS®

Michelle Villagomez
NYC Legislative Senior Director

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

*Hearing before the New York City Council's Committee on Economic Development
Intro. 1660: Creating a Good Food Purchasing Program*

September 18, 2019

Good afternoon. I am Michelle Villagomez, New York City Legislative Senior Director for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). On behalf of the ASPCA and nearly 200,000 New York City supporters, we are pleased to be here to testify in support of Int. 1660, which would create a Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) in New York City. I would like to thank the Economic Development Committee, Chair Paul Vallone, and bill sponsor Andy Cohen for the opportunity to share our views on this forward-thinking measure.

The ASPCA is a national partner to the GFPP, which provides a metric based, flexible framework to encourage large institutions to direct their buying power toward five core values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare and nutrition. We played an integral role in crafting its animal welfare standards, and we support efforts around the country to incorporate GFPP principals into municipal and institutional food sourcing practices. The ASPCA has prioritized the GFPP given its significant potential to improve the lives of the nearly 10 billion land animals raised for meat, milk and eggs in the United States each year. The GFPP offers a practical alternative to many of the welfare problems plaguing animals in today's "factory farming" model, where animals are forced to endure conditions that are cruel and unnatural, such as highly intensive rearing—for example, being packed in housing facilities by the tens of thousands, or immobilized in cages and crates. Additionally, there is little to no welfare oversight on most farms – there is no scheme in place for on-site inspections and auditing, which the GFPP aims to add back into the food system.

Public and consumer sentiment has increasingly turned against these practices in favor of higher-welfare products. Public institutions—including schools—are wonderfully positioned to take up this call, serving as crucial partners in building a new and more humane food system.

The GFPP offers two avenues for improving animal welfare: institutions may opt to direct a percentage of their food dollars toward animal welfare-certified products, whose standards are verified by independent audits; or they can simply reduce their total volume of meat, milk and eggs purchased. If the GFPP is enacted in New York City, either option will promote significant and critically needed improvements for animals in our food system.

The ASPCA believes all animals deserve respectful and compassionate treatment. The GFPP offers cities the opportunity to build on these sentiments by using their purchasing power to commit to standards that impact food production all the way down the line, including how animals are raised. In adopting this forward-thinking program for New York City's public institutions, you have the opportunity to set a high standard not just for food, but for underlying values like the thoughtful treatment of people, the planet and animals. The GFPP offers a unique opportunity to align social values with something as tangible as meals served each day, and to see real impact.

With all of this in mind, the ASPCA respectfully asks the City Council to send an important message that food should not only be healthy, sustainable and fair but also ensure compassionate treatment of farm animals. We thank you for your time and

consideration of both Int. 1660, and our coalition's suggested amendments to strengthen the bill.

Thank you.

The Food Pantry at Columbia

582 Lerner Hall
Columbia University

Testimony of Michael Higgins, Co-Founder and Chair

The Food Pantry at Columbia

Hearing Before the New York City Council Meeting Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Education, and the Committee on General Welfare Calling Upon the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to Expand Eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to ALL College Students

September 18, 2019

I, Michael Higgins, Co-Founder and Chair of The Food Pantry at Columbia, am testifying on behalf of the approximately 35-40% of the students at Columbia University, as well as student across New York City, who go hungry every day. I want to thank Chairperson Louis, Kallos, Chin, and Ayala for their work on behalf of New York City residents in need, as well as the Council at large for inviting me to testify here today.

HISTORY

The Food Pantry at Columbia was formed in May 2016 in a collaborative effort between the General Studies Student Council (GSSC) and the First-Generation, Low-Income Partnership (FLIP). Our mission is simple – relieve hunger on our campus through the acquisition and distribution of both perishable and non-perishable food to those Columbia affiliates who need it the most. During its development, GSSC and FLIP determined there was a hunger issue within the School of General Studies (GS) student population. As a small test pilot, GSSC allocated \$1,000 to purchase food, advertised on social media to the GS student body, and reserved space to distribute the food. Before the end of the first week of the test, we realized that

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Mario Garcia (Vice Chair of Finance) • Damián Hernandez (Vice Chair of Pantry Operations – Morningside Campus) • Sal Valpo (Vice Chair of Pantry Operations – Medical Center Campus) • Sharanya Sivakumar (Vice Chair of Technology) • Adam He (Vice Chair of Volunteer Management)

The Food Pantry at Columbia

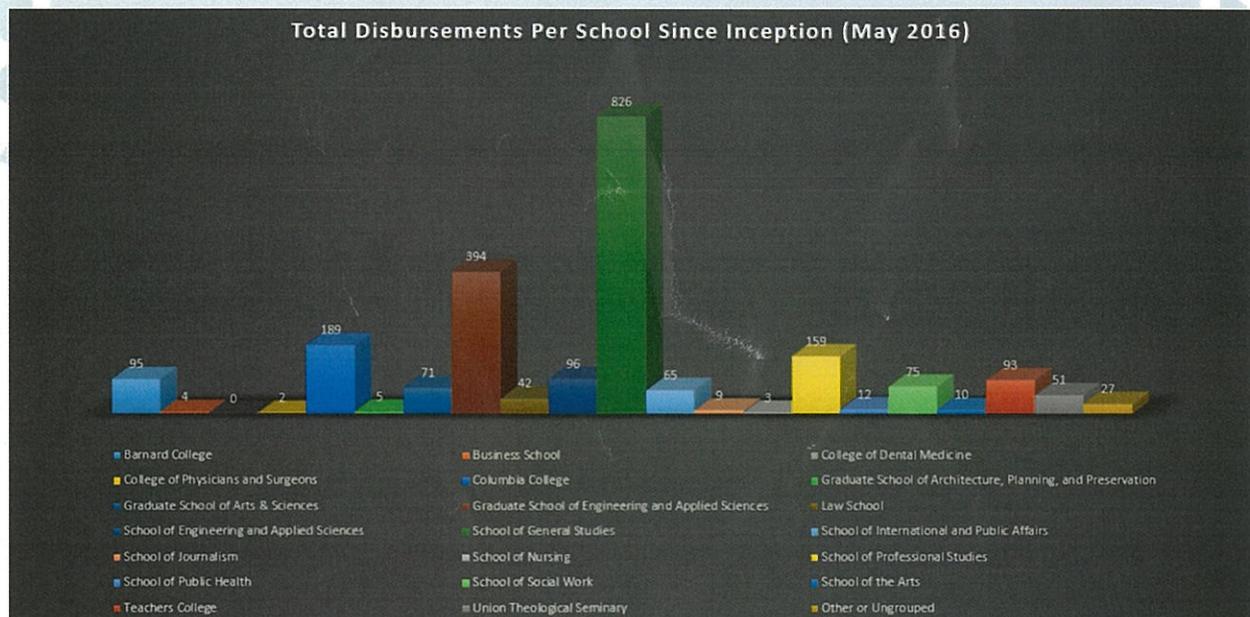
582 Lerner Hall
Columbia University

hunger extends far beyond the border of the School; we were receiving requests for food from across the University. It was then that plans were set in motion to make the pilot a larger, more sustainable initiative.

Less than three year later, The Food Pantry at Columbia is a self-contained, University-recognized student group with an eight-person Board, seven committees, and an average of two hundred volunteers per year.

DATA

To date, The Food Pantry at Columbia has distributed over 2,300 non-perishable disbursements and over 650 perishable disbursements as part of the partnership with the Riverside Farmshare. As our data shows, while the largest usage of The Food Pantry at Columbia comes from the GS student body, all but one of the 21 School within the University have utilized the pantry since our inception.

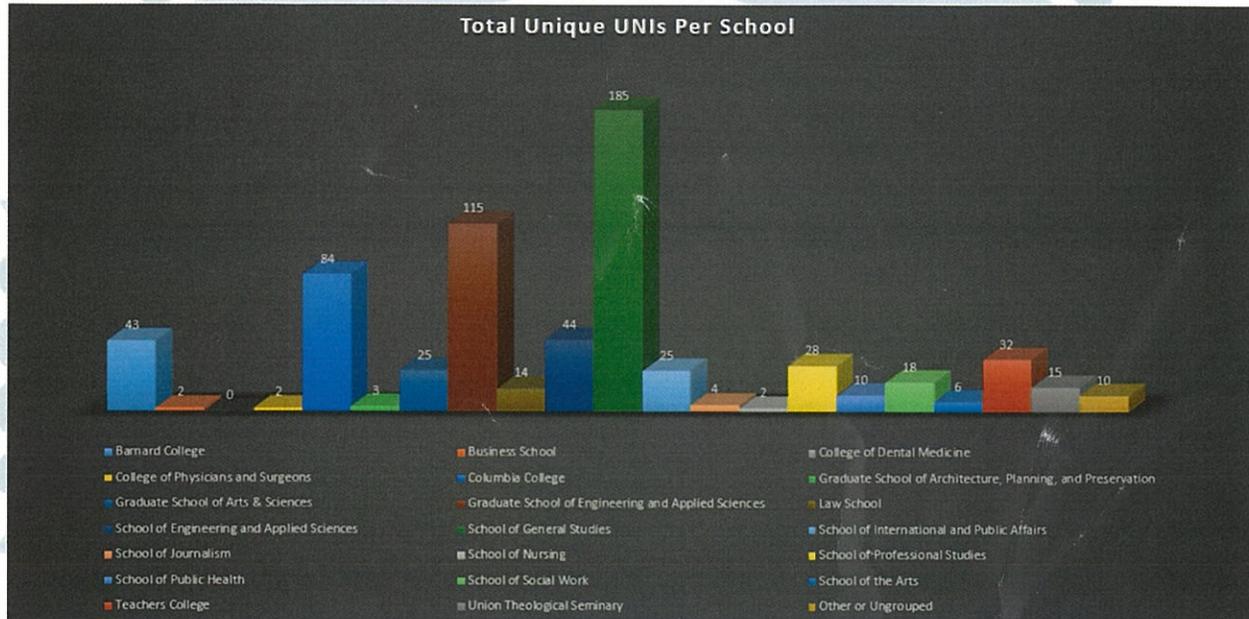


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The Food Pantry at Columbia

582 Lerner Hall
Columbia University

What's even more telling is individual usage of the pantry has spiked across almost every School within the University



This can be attributed not only to The Food Pantry at Columbia's staunch efforts to expand our University footprint, but also the recognition of both the various Schools within the University, and the University as a whole, that student hunger is real, and affects the entire University student population.

WHAT DO WE NEED?

The Food Pantry at Columbia is one of the largest, and arguably the loudest, proponent of food security on the Columbia University campus. However, as SNAP is a governmental benefit, our hands are tied as to how many students we may be able to help. Starting in the latter part of this semester, or the beginning of next semester, The Food Pantry at Columbia will have the opportunity to assist students with processing their SNAP applications. What exactly does that mean for the students? While we will be able to help facilitate the processing of their application, we can do nothing about the criteria that is required to successfully obtain SNAP benefits.

Michael Higgins (Chair) • Daeun Sung (Vice Chair of Communications) • Urvi Awasthi (Vice Chair of Development) • Matthew Linsky (Vice Chair of Events Coordination)
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The Food Pantry at Columbia

582 Lerner Hall
Columbia University

Furthermore, the limitations against accessing SNAP benefits should not be lifted merely for public college and university students. Every student, whether on a two-year public community college or a four-year private university such as Columbia University, should be able to reap the benefits of an expanded SNAP eligibility pool. Our preliminary data shows that seven out of ten of our recipients would need, or be interested in, SNAP benefits. The irony is that, according to a February 2018 study, only 18 percent, or really one of those seven students, will be eligible to receive SNAP benefits¹. Every student, regardless of their socio-economic status, school or university affiliation, or other demographic indicators should be eligible to receive SNAP benefits. If only one out of seven are eligible, please tell me what the other six students should do?

CONCLUSION

The Food Pantry at Columbia is not the cure for hunger on our campus, and our model is not the cure for hunger on any campus. We understand that we are just a patch to larger problem. The Food Pantry at Columbia envisions a strategy that aligns our efforts with efforts of entities within and without the University. It is our hope that this hearing is the continued step to an open discourse regarding hunger on college campuses throughout the city, and how governmental oversight and policy changes can help mitigate the effects of hunger.

Reference:

Allison, Tom. (2018, February). Rethinking SNAP Benefits for College Students.
https://younginvincibles.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Rethinking_SNAP_benefits.pdf

Michael Higgins (Chair) • Daeun Sung (Vice Chair of Communications) • Urvi Awasthi (Vice Chair of Development) • Matthew Linsky (Vice Chair of Events Coordination)
Mario Garcia (Vice Chair of Finance) • Damián Hernandez (Vice Chair of Pantry Operations – Morningside Campus) • Sal Valpo (Vice Chair of Pantry Operations – Medical Center Campus) • Sharanya Sivakumar (Vice Chair of Technology) • Adam He (Vice Chair of Volunteer Management)

Student: Harper Quill
Parent: Kimberly Watkins
Contact: kimwatkins@msn.com
917-689-3065

Testimony at New York City Council Hearing on School Food

September 18, 2019

Hi, my name is Harper Quill and I am a fifth grade student at PS166, the Richard Rogers School of the Arts and Technology on the Upper West Side. I am here today to talk about scratch food in our schools. I support this policy but you should also know that I don't eat school food.

I eat breakfast at home each morning, and I bring lunch from home everyday. One of the main reasons is that I just like the food in my house better. At home we always have fresh fruit, lots of vegetables, and NO junk food. For lunch, my mom packs me a sandwich, some raw veggies, an apple or an orange, and a piece of dark chocolate, never milk chocolate.

The food that's served at my school isn't very good. It smells bad, it looks gooey, and it tastes like cardboard. I've tried it.

Dishes that are made from scratch ingredients can be composted, which is important because we shouldn't waste food. Also, scratch foods aren't packaged, so they create less garbage. Both of these things mean that scratch food dishes are better for the environment.

Scratch dishes are also better for our health. They give kids energy but not too much. They have less sugar and chemicals that make students moody, restless and disruptive. Best of all, scratch cooking is a way for kids to learn about food and nutrition.

In conclusion, I think that New York City schools should serve scratch food to all students, so please vote yes on this proposal.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today.



FOOD INDUSTRY ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK STATE, INC.

130 Washington Avenue • Albany, NY 12210 • Tel (518) 434-1900 • Fax (518) 434-9962
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Testimony
by the Food Industry Alliance of New York State, Inc.
in Support of
Int. No. 1659-2019

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Food Industry Alliance of New York State, Inc. (FIA) regarding Int. No. 1659-2019. FIA is a nonprofit trade association that promotes the interests statewide of New York's grocery, drug and convenience stores. Our members include chain and independent grocery stores that account for a significant share of New York City's retail food market and the grocery wholesalers that supply them.

FIA supports this legislation, which builds on Local Law 134 of 2017, which, among other things, requires the Department of Social Services, in coordination with the Department for the Aging, to establish and implement programming to enable SNAP enrollment at all senior centers. In addition, under Local Law 134 of 2017, the departments are required to submit an annual report to the NYC Council Speaker regarding the Department of Social Services' activities with respect to SNAP enrollment and recertification of seniors.

Under Int. 1659, the annual report must identify barriers to enrolling and recertifying eligible seniors who would benefit from participation in the SNAP program, with a focus on seniors who are unable to travel to senior centers and seniors who are not receiving other city-provided services. The annual report must also contain the departments' plan to overcome such barriers to enrollment and recertification.

Maximizing the SNAP enrollment and recertification of eligible populations should be a top policy priority for the city. Increasing the enrollment of eligible senior citizens is especially important, since they are under enrolled. According to the National Council on Aging, in fiscal year 2014, while 83% of eligible individuals participated in SNAP, just 42% of eligible elderly individuals were enrolled in the program. AARP reports that "...67 percent of struggling older people age 60 and above" who are eligible for SNAP benefits are not receiving them. AARP asserts that as a result "...millions of seniors today are suffering from the debilitating effects of hunger and poor nutrition, despite the fact that most of these 67 percent paid taxes to support the program for years."

A sharp increase in SNAP enrollment and recertification of eligible senior citizens would not only help alleviate hunger in the city; it would also stimulate the city's economy with federal dollars.

For the foregoing reasons, FIA, on behalf of its members, supports adoption of this legislation. We would like to thank Councilmember Chin for introducing the bill and her thoughtful work on this issue. We look forward to working with government stakeholders to facilitate its enactment.

Respectfully submitted,

Food Industry Alliance of New York State, Inc.

Jay M. Peltz

General Counsel and Senior Vice President of Government Relations

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September 18, 2019



Alicia Rodriguez
Director
The Land and Sea Institute

Testimony: Joint Hearing Held by The NYC Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Education and the Committee on General Welfare

RE: Int No. 1660 - In relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program

September 18, 2019

Dear Councilmembers,

My name is Alicia Rodriguez and I am a Brooklyn resident, lawyer, and founder of The Land and Sea Institute, a nonprofit advocating sustainable farming practices and meat reduction policies.

This letter is written in support of Intro No. 1660, which would establish a Good Food Purchasing Program (“GFPP”) in New York City. I’d like to thank the Economic Development Committee Chair Councilman Paul Vallone, bill sponsor Councilman Andy Cohen, and members of the Committee on Economic Development for considering Intro. No. 1660.

New York City is at the forefront of creating impactful environmental and animal welfare policies. As a resident of the city, I have been inspired by the Council’s interest in a NYC Green New Deal, a push for a ban on foie gras, implementation of Meatless Mondays in schools, and plant-based health initiatives in hospitals. The GFPP is an opportunity to continue ongoing climate, health, labor, animal welfare and food justice efforts in the city and a way to provide more transparency in the food system.

The Land and Sea Institute joined the NYC-GFPP Coalition because we share a similar guiding principle — that government action is critical in transforming the food system. There are already 800 million people in the world who are undernourished and the global population is projected to grow from 7.6 billion to 11.2 billion by 2100. Scientists estimate that by 2050 we will need to produce at least 56 percent more calories in order to feed the world’s growing population without using more land for agriculture. Without government intervention, the world will be unlikely to avoid these outcomes and meet these targets.

The GFPP is an approach to modifying the food system that can be (and has been) implemented smoothly. New York City would join a [growing list](#) of large cities and city school districts that have adopted these standards (including Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago).

I am excited that the Council is considering the GFPP’s potential to help New York City alter its food purchases and create a food system that works well for people, animals and the environment. The following information provides more detailed support for the adoption of the GFPP in New York City relating to environmental sustainability and animal welfare:

1. Sustainability and Animal Agriculture

Overwhelming amounts of scientific research have indicated that humanity is on the verge of experiencing catastrophic loss from climate change. Implementing the GFPP can play a large role in mitigating New York City’s carbon footprint. Our food system is both contributing to and affected by environmental degradation. Each year, the animal agriculture industry slaughters upwards of 70 billion land animals and pulls over 2 trillion fish from the sea. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the

United Nations (UNFAO) [reports](#) that animal agriculture is “one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global.” This industry is a leading contributor to deforestation, methane and carbon emissions, loss of wildlife, collapse of ocean ecosystems, and freshwater depletion. Animal agriculture has the following impacts:

- causes 80% of the [Amazon rainforest destruction](#),
- contributes to at least 14.5% of [GHG emissions](#),
- produces 35–40% of [annual anthropogenic methane emissions](#) (which are [23x more warming](#) than CO₂),
- and uses 26% of [ice-free land](#).

The annual production of meat is [projected to increase](#) by over 200 million tons by 2050, and developing countries [are projected to quadruple](#) their meat intake by 2030 from 1960 levels. Animal agriculture will continue to impact our food systems, economy, and health (especially the world’s most vulnerable populations) if we do not change course.

2. Animal Welfare in the Meat/Dairy/Egg Industry

In addition to plaguing the environment, the industrial animal agriculture industry is causing unnecessary amounts of animal suffering. Animals’ living conditions on farms vary dramatically from one farm to the next, with limited governmental regulations and oversight. Some farms have 100 animals and others have tens of thousands; some farms reject non-therapeutic antibiotic usage and growth hormones to protect public health, whereas many industrial farms use unregulated amounts of antibiotics to maximize profits and fit as many animals as possible into cramped spaces.

On these industrial farms, many animals are kept in large buildings with no windows, where they are squished into cages and crates and never see natural light or feel grass under their feet.

More consumers nationwide are learning of these conditions and expressing an interest in making intensive confinement practices [illegal](#), sourcing their food from higher welfare farms, and/or reducing meat/dairy/egg intake. **But the current food purchasing policies in New York City do not yet allow or encourage agencies to take into account the environmental and animal welfare conditions on farms when evaluating procurement bids.**

Intro No. 1660 would help cities create food purchasing practices that incorporate sustainability and animal welfare concerns. Additionally, given that most farms are already familiar with third-party animal welfare certifications in the GFPP standards, agencies can use the city’s purchasing power to incentivize farms to shift toward higher welfare practices.

3. Benefits for New York City

The GFPP would have health benefits for the city, combat climate change, and protect New York's economies:

- **Health:** Purchasing higher welfare animal products and more plant-based foods will limit the rise in antibiotic resistant bugs, keep harmful growth hormones fed to animals out of the food supply, and introduce millions of citizens to healthy plant-based diets that help prevent chronic disease. As the authors of a [Lancet Report](#) released this past January noted, current global diets “contribute to a substantial rise in the incidence of diet-related obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases, including coronary heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Unhealthy diets pose a greater risk to morbidity and mortality than does unsafe sex, and alcohol, drug, and tobacco use combined.”

- **Climate Change:** Reducing New York City's animal product purchasing benefits [resource efficiency](#), [water conservation](#), and [land preservation](#). Animal foods generally use significantly more resources and emit more pollutants during production than plant-based foods. As a comparative example, a 2018 [University of Michigan study](#) concluded that the Beyond Burger, a plant-based burger made from pea protein, canola oil, coconut oil, and beet juice extract, emits 90% less greenhouse gas emissions, uses 46% less energy, has 99% less impact on water scarcity, and 93% less impact on land use than a quarter pound of beef produced in the United States.

- **Water:** Lowering New York City's animal product purchases and buying meat/dairy/eggs from more sustainably managed farms will help preserve water supplies in areas where livestock and feed for livestock are raised. Animal production uses [one third of the total water](#) used in agricultural production. In drought-prone regions, such as Southern California and the Southwest United States, livestock operations play a large role in [groundwater and aquifer depletion](#). Additionally, these operations' heavy use of [fertilizers](#), [antibiotics](#), and [other chemicals](#) pollute bodies of water and increase [human health risks](#).

- **Economy:** Increasing plant-based food purchasing as part of the GFPP is an adaptation strategy that would help New York's economy. New York faces specific environmental and economic challenges from global warming. The United States Fourth National Climate Assessment released in November showed that climate change will have [adverse economic effects](#) in New York:

- ❑ “The Northeast is projected to experience a significant increase in summer heat and the number and/or duration of heat waves that will further stress summertime energy peak load demands from higher air conditioning use and the greater need to

pump and treat water. Energy supply failures can also affect transportation operations, and even after electricity is restored, a significant time lag can occur until transportation services such as subway signals and traffic lights return to operation.”

- ❑ “Key coastal vulnerabilities arise from complex interactions among climate change and other physical, human, and ecological factors. These vulnerabilities have the potential to fundamentally alter life at the coast and disrupt coast-dependent economic activities.”
- ❑ “By 2035, and under both lower and higher scenarios (RCP4.5 and RCP8.5), the Northeast is projected to be more than 3.6°F (2°C) warmer on average than during the preindustrial era. This would be the largest increase in the contiguous United States and would occur as much as two decades before global average temperatures reach a similar milestone.”

By lowering the carbon footprint of New York City’s food purchases, the city will be adapting to the pressing changes to our ecosystems, health, and economies.

Intro No. 1660 offers a holistic way to improve the food systems in New York City and New York State. I thank the Council for considering Intro. No. 1660 and respectfully request the Council to support its swift passage.

Sincerely,
Alicia Rodriguez

NAME: Dr. Toni Liquori, EdD and MPH

TITLE: Public Health Nutritionist – Executive Director, School Food Focus (former) and Faculty, Nutrition Program, Teachers College Columbia University (former)

ORGANIZATION: Volunteer, Community Food Advocates

TESTIMONY: Joint Hearing held by the NYC Council Committee of Economic Development, Committee of General Education and the Committee on General Welfare

DATE: September 18, 2019

RE: Introduction #1660 – In relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program

First of all, many thanks to the Economic Development Committee Chair Councilman Paul Vallone, the bill sponsor Councilman Andy Cohen, members of the Committee on Economic Development and all who have taken time out to be here today and/or to submit testimony.

My name is Toni Liquori. I am a public health nutritionist and delighted to volunteer with Community Food Advocates in its role with the NYC Good Food Purchasing Coalition. I have long-time experience with the development of the Good Food Purchasing Guidelines, both in their inception and then with the current or 2.0 version introduced five years later, in 2017. Because of this background, I am pleased to say that my position is one of very much supporting the Good Food Purchasing Program bill, Introduction #1660 – both in its specific terms and its spirit of using the power of procurement to create a transparent and equitable food system to prioritize the health and well-being of people, animals and the environment.

This legislation is special for school children because it begins a journey of food procurement change which, when taken up in full, will push NYC School Food and Nutrition Services to **shift** its food purchasing towards food with attributes that reflect the whole story of food. In other words, food:

1. Grown in local economies;
2. (That) promotes wholeness and minimal processing while reducing salt, added sugars, saturated fats and red meat consumption and eliminating all artificial additives;
3. Valuing the multiple workforces who deal with it, from farm to fork;
4. Grown under environmentally sustainable conditions; and
5. Grown on farms where animals have been provided with healthy and humane care.

The Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) recognizes that the above parameters for the whole story of food are not the norm in today's high-tech, industrialized times. Very much aware of this, GFPP developed its standards across a mix of disciplines to speak directly to this problem. By taking into account the many points in the full life cycle of food – where neither its nutritional value nor its value to the communities from which it came – means that, district-by-district nationwide, GFPP and its partners will work with public institutions to purchase a “wholesomeness” that is transparent, that children deserve, and that the food system has the capacity and responsibility to deliver on behalf of the planet. The structure of the GFPP recognizes that this kind of change will take time, needs to be measurable from year to year so that all those involved – people working directly on the food procurement changes, students who eat this food and the communities in which they live – are aware of the fundamental **shift** taking place.

In the little time I have left, I want to speak about what is most familiar to me – the highly processed food products that dominate our school cafeterias nationwide.

Our conventional food system is one that changed radically with the working knowledge generated about chemicals and gases during our two great wars – especially World War II. Beginning in the 1950s, the application of this knowledge changed the very nature of this system – from farm, to aggregators, processing and manufacturing, its distribution channels, and finally to the public through its retail and foodservice arms. Some level of food processing is obviously necessary. Yet, multiple layers of processing have been introduced in the last 50 years – extractions, chemical modifications, hydrogenation, extrusions, emulsifications, addition of cosmetic flavors and colors, genetic engineering, etc. – where every by-product to each process is then applied elsewhere, monetized in some way and not fully tested for safety purposes. The sum of this, in terms of outcome, is only now beginning to be understood.

Recently, the NOVA system (Carlos Monteiro) has gained worldwide research attention by distinguishing the different levels of processing:

1. Whole and minimally processed food;
2. Basic culinary ingredients;
3. Processed food; and
4. Ultra-processed food.

Essentially, you want more of the food in the first 2 categories and less in the others. You want this primarily because these foods (plant- or animal-based) will not have gone through the types of intensive processing that disrupt food matrices and what is recognized as the nutrition health potential of the food itself (Anthony Fardet).

By today, about 60% of food energy (or, calories) in the US, on average, comes from highly processed (or, ultra-processed) food, Level 4 above. Because these are the foods that have been exposed to the most intense of the processing changes and hardly contain any whole food, this is not a good thing. Given social and racial equity issues, one can trust that this percentage is even higher for low-income households, thus fitting hand-to-glove with the meager budgets of public food programs. Why? The BIG FOOD industrialized system dominates in this part of the market because federal policy has too often aligned with it to support these cheap and “forever food products” in all kinds of ways, large and small, while everyone is being fed.

Wisely, one indicator (among many) in the Good Food Purchasing Guidelines will track the extent to which NYC School Food and Nutrition Services *“increases the amounts of whole and minimally processed foods purchased by 5% from baseline year, with a 25% goal within 5 years.”* If NYC is able to include a robust percentage of its purchasing records in its assessment (both commercial and USDA Foods), as a community we need to be prepared to see a fairly low percentage of whole and minimally processed foods, especially with the meat and meat alternative food groups because of the nature of the market itself. While it may alarm some, this percentage needs to be recognized in the context of today’s food system and as a real beginning. If the GFPP does not break out its analysis to each of the food groups, I recommend this be done as well.

When NYC can truly assess its baseline of foods to tell the full story of the food served, set goals for change and track progress through its partnership with the Center for Good Food Purchasing as other districts have been doing nationwide, it will be time to celebrate the beginnings of a more transparent procurement system – both for our children and the planet.

Finally, I recommend that the NYC Good Food Purchasing Coalition participate directly in this partnership with the Center and City government.

Thank you for the time you take to read this. I am only sorry I could not be present today.

September 18, 2019

Before the NYC Council Committee on Economic Development

Testimony in **support** of [Int 1660 - In relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program](#)

Dear Honorable Chair Vallone and Members of the Committee on Economic Development,

On behalf of Friends of the Earth and our more than 12,000 members and supporters in New York City, I urge you to support the adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) in New York City. Thank you to Councilman Cohen for sponsoring this legislation, to the Committee for its consideration of this proposal, and to the many agencies across the city who have provided valuable input.

We commend New York City for its efforts to significantly reduce its carbon footprint. Leveraging New York City's immense purchasing power towards climate-friendly, low-carbon food with the GFPP is critical to meeting the jurisdiction's target reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The GFPP will also help New York City further its social justice goals by purchasing more food that is environmentally sustainable, local, healthy, fair, and humane.

Friends of the Earth is a national partner of the Center for Good Food Purchasing and helped create the updated Good Food Purchasing Standards, which now emphasize meat and dairy reduction as a strategy for improving the environmental sustainability and animal welfare-related impacts of food.

Reducing meat and dairy consumption is critical to generating better health and environmental outcomes. Americans are consuming significantly more meat than recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGAs), and there is a scientific consensus that red and processed meats, in particular, are contributing to heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, and that plant-forward diets reduce the risks of these diseases. Beyond the health benefits, reducing meat and dairy consumption is a crucial component of sustainability. From a climate standpoint, livestock production accounts for more than half of all food-related GHG emissions and about 14.5% of overall GHG emissions globally. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, cutting meat and dairy consumption is one of the most cost-effective and impactful climate mitigation strategies available.

Friends of the Earth partnered with Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) to analyze the environmental, cost-savings, and student satisfaction benefits after two years of reducing meat and dairy as part of its GFPP implementation. In our report, "Shrinking the Carbon and Water Footprint of School Food," we found that reductions in meat and dairy purchases led to 14% fewer GHG emissions, which is equivalent to installing 87 rooftop solar systems. Installing that many solar systems on school buildings would have cost close to \$3 million, but OUSD achieved the same reduction in GHGs from shifting its menus while saving \$42,000. Meanwhile, student satisfaction with meals actually *improved*. We believe that the GFPP, properly implemented in New York City, could achieve similar reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while saving tax dollars and improving customer satisfaction.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. We look forward to working with you to make New York City more healthy, sustainable, and just.

About Friends of the Earth U.S.: Founded by David Brower in 1969, Friends of the Earth U.S. is the United States' voice of the world's largest federation of grassroots environmental groups, with a presence in 74 countries. Friends of the Earth works to defend the environment and champion a more healthy and just world. Our current campaigns focus on promoting clean energy and solutions to climate change, ensuring the food we eat and products we use are safe and sustainable and protecting marine ecosystems and the people who live and work near them.



LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

David French

Director of Philanthropy and Healthy Food Initiatives

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House

Joint Hearing held by the NYC Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Education and the Committee on General Welfare

September 18, 2019

RE: Int #1660 - In Relation to Creating a Good Food Purchasing Program.

I'd like to thank the Economic Development Committee Chair Council Member Paul Vallone, bill sponsor Council Member Andy Cohen and members of the Committee on Economic Development for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is David French, I'm the Director of Philanthropy and Healthy Food Initiatives at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, and we are a member of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition.

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House supports all of the bills on the agenda today but is here specifically in support of Int #1660 – In Relation to Creating a Good Food Purchasing Program. As members of the Good Food Purchasing Policy Campaign, our proposed amendments to the bill will be submitted separately.

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is a 125-year-old nonprofit settlement house on the East Side of Manhattan that operates a model farm-to-institution food program. We serve 400,000 meals annually through City-funded programs, including two senior centers, a homeless shelter, Head Start program, after school, summer camp and Alzheimer's day program. We serve 60% vegetarian meals using 95% fresh food, 30-40% of it locally sourced, and are the largest institutional customer of Greenmarket Co., serving or distributing 56 tons of local food annually through our kitchens and GrowNYC Food Box site.

In 2015, in response to the enormous interest in how we are able to serve so much fresh, healthy and local food, we launched a program called *The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill*

Neighborhood House to teach other nonprofit organizations serving government-funded meals to implement our farm-to-institution model.

New York City nonprofit organizations serve approximately 50 million City-funded meals annually through diverse programs such as senior centers, homeless shelters, early childhood programs, soup kitchens, supportive housing residences, and more.

Transforming existing government-funded meals to a farm-to-institution model represents an enormous opportunity to improve public health, strengthen the local economy and make our food systems more sustainable and more just – *without raising costs*. Yet, the great majority of nonprofit organizations face significant barriers to envisioning and implementing such change and require hands-on support to take even small steps toward this goal.

The Teaching Kitchen is an award-winning, year-long training and technical assistance program for nonprofit cooks and food service directors. Offered in English and Spanish, the program focuses on implementing incremental change to transform existing food service operations to a farm-to-institution model. *The Teaching Kitchen's* goals are:

- To improve the health of low-income New Yorkers by making government-funded institutional meals healthier;
- To localize the New York region's food systems, supporting local farms and strengthening our region's economy, resiliency and sustainability.
- To provide the next generation of institutional cooks and program staff with the knowledge and skills to build a healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food system.

In four years, *The Teaching Kitchen* has trained 104 nonprofit programs* serving 8 million meals annually to low-income clients – often those most at risk for diet-related disease. Clients at participating organizations now consume significantly more fresh fruits and vegetables, more local produce, more vegetarian meals, more whole grains and less meat, processed food and sugar. In response to the great interest in *The Teaching Kitchen*, we are now working to create an online version of the program that would expand our impact in New York City, New York State and beyond.

The Good Food Purchasing Program would help New York City to move toward the goals that Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and over a hundred of our trainee programs work toward every day and would support the City's health, economy, sustainability and equitability.

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House supports Int. #1660 and all of the food-related items on the agenda today. We also encourage the City to: establish quotas for local procurement for City-funded meals; emphasize fresh, healthy, local, and sustainable food; expand composting programs; and strengthen the rights and fair wages of workers throughout the food chain.

To achieve the implementation of Int #1660, we believe it is critical that the City have in place a Director of Food Policy and a 10-year food policy plan, and so also enthusiastically support Int #1664 and Int #1666.

We thank you for your consideration of this testimony and Int. #1660 and hope that the City will adopt the Good Food Purchasing Program

*The 104 programs that have participated in *The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House* come from all five boroughs of New York City and are operated by the following nonprofit organizations:

Acacia Network, Bay Ridge Senior Center, B'Above Worldwide Institute Inc., Bedford Stuyvesant Early Childhood Development Center Inc (BSECDC), Bellevue Day Care Center, Billy Martin Child Development Center, BronxWorks, Bronx Baptist Day Care and Learning Center, Brooklyn Community Services, Brooklyn Kindergarten Society, Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens, Children of Promise NYC, Chinese American Planning Council, Citizens Care Day Care Center, Community Access, Community Life Center, Inc., Concerned Parents of Jamaica Early Learning Center, Covenant House, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, The Door, East Harlem Block Nursery, Inc. 1, Educational Alliance, Family Life Academy Charter School, Fort Greene Senior Citizens Council, Future of America Learning Center, Goddard Riverside Community Center, Grand Street Settlement, The Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee, HCHCIC Ace Integration, Head Start, Henry Street Settlement, Highbridge Advisory Council, Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, Jamaica Service Program for Older Adults, The Jewish Board, Joint Council for Economic Opportunity, Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, Neighbors Together Community Café, North Bronx National Council of Negro Women Child Development Center, Northside Center, Odyssey House, Pine Harbour, Presbyterian Senior Services, Project FIND, Project Hospitality, Project Renewal, Queens Community House, Riseboro Community Partnership, Senior Citizens Council of Clinton County Inc., Services Now for Adult Persons, St. John's Bread & Life, St Mark's U.M.C. Family Services Council, St. Nicks Alliance, Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, Sunnyside Community Services, Trabajamos Community Head Start, Two Bridges Neighborhood Council, Union Settlement Association, United Community Centers, YM & YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood



Alexis Harrison
Partnerships Coordinator
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

**Written Testimony: Joint Hearing held by the NYC Council Committee on Economic Development,
Committee on Education and the Committee on General Welfare**

September 18, 2019

Good afternoon and thank you to Economic Development Committee members and Chair Councilman Paul Vallone for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Alexis Harrison and I am the Partnerships Coordinator for the Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and also a member of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition.

Our programs strive to improve the local food system with the ultimate goal of supporting the development of good food jobs; shifting the food purchasing practices of our neighborhood institutions that serve our most vulnerable populations at early child care centers, senior centers, and hospitals; and, continuously working to help create a food system that is led by and supportive of the community.

Our farm to institution work comes from a history of community organizing with community organizations, leaders, and growers around the need to identify how to increase the availability of fresh, local foods in our community. Currently, we are working with a Philadelphia-based food hub, Common Market - who sources from and supports small farmers from Upstate NY to rural Maryland - to work with early care center, senior centers, and hospitals to begin purchasing more local, seasonal, and culturally appropriate food. We are increasing working to identify how we can hyper-localize this work and involve Brooklyn and New York City growers in the supply chain.

Our most recent research through the Vital Brooklyn Initiative for the State Department of Agriculture and Markets on a Central Brooklyn Food Hub proposes a facility that would be community owned and operated that would increase the food flow of NYS and NYC grown produce to institutions, retailers, and community food providers for our residents to access. This report also proposes the need for a larger food systems focus that not only include increasing food access and changing procurement practices but also is intentional about the community having self determination along the pathways of the food system through meaningful and good job and career creation, building the capacity of our local growers and farmers, and involving the community in decision making and prioritizing.

Restoration supports the passing of legislation Int 1660 to adopt a Good Food Purchasing Policy to significantly shift the food procurement practices of City agencies. Restoration joined the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) Coalition as it aligns with our goals and work to transform our current food system to better support the health and economic mobility of the Central Brooklyn communities we work with, along with low income communities throughout the City.



If passed, Good Food Purchasing Program legislation will ensure that decisions about the \$820 million dollars spent on food contracts by City agencies each year will go beyond considering if a vendor is simply the cheapest option, but will evaluate a vendor from a more holistic set of values that we as a community and a City need to codify to ensure a better life for our most vulnerable residents. These values include whether a vendor's practices support the local economy, whether a vendor's labor practices are ethical, whether food sourced meets nutritional and other health standards, and that considerations about both environmental impact and animal welfare are taken into account. Given the scale of City contracts, if adopted, this legislation would have impacts far beyond City agencies. Economies of scale will create change in the food purchasing practices in the City and beyond, and the overall food system.

The Good Food Purchasing Program has the framework to critically change the purchasing practices of our agencies that better support the communities that interact with them. Restoration believes the bill can be improved by adding language to be explicit about the desired impacts of the Program including more specific language to support minority and women owned businesses and enterprises to be in a position to bid for forthcoming contracts. The GFPP Coalition's proposed amendments to the bill will be submitted separately to reflect this desire.

The other bills introduced are also extremely important for NYC to change how residents are informed and access key resources. We know in our work in supporting community gardens that many residents are not aware of the resources in their community and if they are, they are not sure how to access them. Public education, marketing and outreach is a huge task that needs to be sustained to make sure that communities are accessing these public resources that can help them live healthful lives. And these resources should be intentionally extended to our most vulnerable populations. We support Int 1650, Int 1654, and Int 1659 that would increase public awareness, education, and access related to the Health Bucks program, the City's farm-to-city projects, and supplement nutritional assistance benefits (SNAP), particularly targeting our most vulnerable and food insecure communities.

We support Int 1653 put forth by Councilmember Ampry-Sauels. In our work, we have heard about the limitations community gardens have and desires to expand their operations to get their food out into the community. This passing bill will remove current limitations and allow them to operate markets within their gardens, in turn changing the landscape of food access in our communities. Many community gardens are concentrated in Central Brooklyn -- there are currently 60 community gardens in East New York alone, more than in any other neighborhood in NYC. Community education about nutrition, skillbuilding, and food justice are also integral to many gardens' operations. These community spaces are integral for beyond increasing food access but for building community and increasing education about the connection between food and community.

As we continue to consider food access, reducing food waste, and developing a plan to use urban agriculture and the food system to address systemic challenges our communities are facing, Restoration looks forward to seeing a direct positive impact on the Central Brooklyn residents.

Thank you again to the NYC City Councilmembers for your consideration of 'Introduction # 1660 – In relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program,' Int 1650, Int 1654, Int 1659, and Int 1653.



Our work in helping to create healthy neighborhoods and thriving families aligns with the goals of GFPP: we work to support local community and family owned enterprises, providing technical support to community growers, and are leading the charge in developing a pathway for good food jobs.



The Fortune Society
BUILDING PEOPLE, NOT PRISONS

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Testimony on: Int 1660 - In relation to creating a good food purchasing program.

September 18, 2019

New York City Council
Committee on Economic Development
Committee on Education
Committee on General Welfare

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I'm Jaime McBeth, Director of Food and Nutrition at the Fortune Society where we help formerly incarcerated people successfully re-enter society. As many as 90% of the current prison population will return to our communities. At Fortune, we want to know if they'll have jobs, a stable home, and access to good food. We want to know what impact they'll have on the disproportionately Black and Brown communities to which they return. We believe that values-based language in GFPP can offer answers to some of our questions.

1. **Jobs.** According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, there are 139 Black farmers working on the more than 36,000 plus farms in New York State. A hundred years ago, Black farmers held about 14% of farm land in the US. This is perhaps not the time to elaborate on the unscrupulous lending practices and outright violence that decimated black farm ownership in this country. It is, however, a good place to start discussing solutions. As we know, many of New York State prisons are located in rural New York and house a disproportionate number of African-Americans and Latinos. It is a sad fact that when many young people of color from impoverished NYC communities refer to "upstate," they're referring to prisons. We imagine a future where visiting their uncle upstate means going to his farm not a prison. Including language in GFPP that incentivizes farms and farmers who hire formerly incarcerated people is a start. Supporting job training and entrepreneurship programs at the various farms on NYS prisons is a step further.
2. **Health.** It's tough for some to think about feeding prisoners fresh, healthy food. But as a nutritionist, I see the end result of not doing so. In my daily work as Fortune's registered dietitian, I often treat individuals who have served 20, 30 or 40-year long prison sentences. The majority are sick and all are impoverished. Diabetes, gout, heart disease, fatty liver are among the most common conditions I see. While the community is no longer paying for them to be incarcerated, we pay for them to receive healthcare often through our overtaxed emergency medicine system. A reasonable shift in preference for fresh, health-forming foods in prisons would help. This doesn't translate into creating gourmet menus for incarcerated people. It does mean teaching prisoners (through the example of what we put on their plate) the basics of modern healthy eating—plant-focused, whole foods. Eating is an inherently social behavior. The hope is that formerly incarcerated individuals would

spread good eating habits upon their return. Including prisons in the value-based language of health promotion is something we value. Imagine further if GFPP harnessed the Department of Corrections' purchasing power to incentivize produce procurement from farms run by formerly incarcerated farmers. With GFPP, we believe that there are many possibilities to promote health, equity and reform.

Thank you for the opportunity to explore a new vision for food policy and procurement in NYC.

Jaime McBeth, RDN
Director, Food & Nutrition
Fortune Society
jmcbeth@fortunesociety.org

GREATER NEW YORK HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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September
Eighteen
2019

Council Member Carlina Rivera
Chair, Committee on Hospitals
New York City Council
250 Broadway, Suite 1808
New York, NY 10007

RE: Statement for Hearing: “The Delivery of Culturally Competent & Equitable Health Care Services in New York City Hospitals.”

Dear Council Member Rivera:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement on behalf of the Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA), which represents more than 140 public and not-for-profit hospitals and health systems in New York State—the majority in New York City. GNYHA is proud to serve New York City’s hospitals and health systems, which take their responsibility to provide respectful, high-quality care to everyone who walks through their doors very seriously.

My statement covers GNYHA’s and our members’ work on culturally competent care, including maternal and child health, language access, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) services.

Cultural Competency

Hospitals include cultural competency training as part of new staff orientation and build it into ongoing training requirements. Hospitals are also increasingly finding innovative ways to help their staff understand each institution’s culture and expectations of respect for every patient. These include special programs that celebrate different cultures, programs that share and celebrate hospitals’ LGBTQ+ policies, the establishment of diversity councils and employee resource groups, and special programs that provide an opportunity to discuss racism and implicit bias.

GNYHA supports these initiatives by convening members to discuss and share best practices in cultural diversity. Most recently, GNYHA—under a grant from the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and with supplemental GNYHA funding—provided cultural competence training to almost 2,000 frontline staff and managers, mostly from New York City hospitals. In



GNYHA is a dynamic, constantly evolving center for health care advocacy and expertise, but our core mission—helping hospitals deliver the finest patient care in the most cost-effective way—never changes.

addition to basic cultural competence, the training covered implicit bias and respect for LGBTQ+ and disabled patients. We are now working to convert this training into a “train the trainer” model that can be shared with the membership.

GNYHA also took the lead in drafting several recommendations to DOH on how to reduce maternal mortality, including a recommendation to design and implement—with State funding—implicit bias training for maternal health care providers. The State is now working on implementing this training on a pilot basis. We will continue to work with the State on this issue as the pilot is rolled out.

Hospital Language Access

All hospitals in New York State are required to have language access programs that address the language needs of patients who present to the hospital. Hospitals have policies and protocols in place, and designated staff to coordinate hospital activities, including process improvement to address any issues that may arise. GNYHA supports these activities by convening hospital coordinators to share best practices and challenges, and to collaborate with State and national experts in the field. Language access is a continuing priority for GNYHA members, and we will continue to offer them a forum to discuss these issues and share best practices.

LGBTQ+-Friendly Care

Many New York City hospitals and health systems are national leaders in LGBTQ+ care, and many have LGBTQ+ centers whose mission is to ensure that policies and practice are in place to provide quality care to LGBTQ+ patients. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has recognized many hospitals and health systems across New York City as leaders in LGBTQ+ care as part of HRC’s Health Equity Index. The index reviews hospital policies and practices across many domains, including non-discrimination and staff training, patient benefits and support, employee benefits and policies, and transgender care.

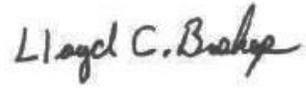
Just as we do with language access, GNYHA has long worked with our member hospitals to identify and share best practices in LGBTQ+ care. Today, the very day of this hearing, GNYHA convened members to discuss best practices on the collection and use of sexual orientation and gender identity patient data. Many of our members are quite advanced in working on these issues and serve as faculty for the programs that GNYHA convenes. GNYHA and its members are committed to continuously improving LGBTQ+ care.

Conclusion

GNYHA and its entire membership are strongly committed to ensuring that hospitals provide culturally competent care. We appreciate the City Council’s interest in this issue and look forward to working together to serve New York City’s diverse population.

If you have any questions, please contact Andrew Title (atitle@gnyha.org) or David Labdon (dlabdon@gnyha.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lloyd C. Bishop". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lloyd C. Bishop
Senior Vice President
Community Health, Diversity, and Health Equity



Testimony in Support for Int. 1660, "In relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program"

September 18, 2019

Dear Chair Councilman Vallone, and members of the Committee on Economic Development:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support for the Introduction #1660. My name is Andrew Barrett and I am the New York Program Director at FoodCorps. Our organization is also a member of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition.

FoodCorps works to connect kids to healthy food in schools across the city of New York. Our AmeriCorps service members serve in schools to help students learn what healthy food is, where it comes from, and eat it every day. Through this work, we know the critical role food and nutrition play in students' lives and their ability to learn. School meals are often a primary source of nourishment for thousands of students in New York City where one in six children is food insecure and at-risk for hunger. Research shows that students who eat healthy foods at school are more likely to develop healthy habits, thrive in classrooms, and live healthy lives.

Healthy meals start with procurement of healthy ingredients. At FoodCorps, our work in schools is guided by a vision that every student has access to delicious and culturally relevant food that is made from whole, nourishing ingredients, and is sourced in ways that support local economies, sustainability, and the health of farmers, food workers, and students themselves. Creating a strong good food purchasing standards and framework is an important step toward achieving this goal.

Food education programs like FoodCorps introduce healthy food to kids in school and get them excited to eat it through hands-on gardening, cooking, and tasting lessons. Studies show that students with access to these programs eat three times more fruits and vegetables than kids who do not. Developing a strong Good Food Purchasing Program in New York City will complement and maximize our impacts by ensuring that our school district puts local, sustainable, healthy foods on lunch trays.

This legislation follows precedents from several other cities such as Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. who all passed laws adopting this public procurement model. It is time for New York City to become a leader in creating a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system by adopting the Introduction #1660. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Barrett
New York Program Director, FoodCorps

get involved
FoodCorps.org

connect
(212) 596-7045

visit
1140 SE 7th Ave, Suite 110
Portland, OR 97214

Testimony of the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute

Before The New York City Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Education,
and Committee on General Welfare

Joint Meeting on Growing Food Equity Bills and Resolutions

September 18, 2019

The Speaker's recent report on *Growing Food Equity in New York City* describes and offers concrete responses to serious food related problems that affect New York City including high levels of food insecurity and diet-related diseases, lack of access to healthy and affordable food for many New Yorkers, negative climate impacts from our food system, food waste, low wages and limited benefits for the city's food workforce, and persistent racial/ethnic gaps in all food outcomes. Once again, the City Council has played a key role in advancing food planning and policy

Today's hearing considers 14 proposed new local laws and two proposed resolutions that together have the potential to enable New York City to make significant progress in reducing these problems. As one of the signatories of the international Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, New York City has a unique opportunity to lead by example in growing urban food equity. We support the legislation being considered today, but rather than commenting on each specific proposed law or resolution, our testimony highlights key factors that we believe the City Council should consider as it seeks to spark a new round of public policy initiatives to improve New York City's food environments.

Our suggestions are based on our [2018 report](#) analyzing 10 years of food policy changes in New York City. Many of the recommendations from the Growing Food Equity report and embodied in the legislation under consideration today embrace those in that report, to our knowledge, the most comprehensive assessment of the synergistic and cumulative impact of the food policies of the City Council and Mayors Michael Bloomberg and Bill DeBlasio. Our report concluded that, on the one hand, over the last decade, New York City has implemented dozens of new food policy initiatives, many constituencies have claimed a voice in shaping food policy, and food policy has become a higher priority for the Mayor, City Council, and other city officials. These accomplishments provide a strong foundation for the future progress that the policies under consideration today can bring.

On the other hand, our report found that, despite a decade of food policy initiatives, key indicators of nutritional well-being and food equity have barely budged and wide socioeconomic and racial/ethnic gaps in health and food access persist. This is in part due to current governance structures which seem inadequate to create effective responses to some of the most serious threats to a healthy food system for New York City, including continuing gentrification, Republican federal initiatives to roll back the advances in food policy of the last decade, growing income inequality, and the disruption of food retail in New York and the nation. Setting clear objectives for food policy in New York City and ensuring that residents have significant power to shape their local food environments are prerequisites for making substantive improvements in the next decade of urban food policy.

As the City Council begins to address these problems, we urge you to ask that most basic question: “What can we do this year and in the future to ensure that ten years from now, we are not again wondering why there hasn’t been more progress in achieving healthier, more equitable and sustainable food environments?”

To achieve the goals articulated in the Speaker’s report, we suggest that the City Council consider these key factors:

1. **Coordinated Implementation.** Ensure that the goals and strategies embodied in these 16 measures reinforce each other and do not conflict or compete for resources. In our view, the first wave of food activism in New York City proposed too many competing goals and plans and failed to allocate enough new resources, thus limiting the impact of the laudable new attention to food policy. Perhaps the re-authorized Office of Food Policy (Intro 1666) and a new City Council committee or sub-committee could play these coordinating roles.
2. **Deep Food Democracy.** The Speaker’s agenda calls attention to the key role of food governance. Finding new ways to give more New Yorkers a voice in shaping their food choices and food environments can make food democracy a reality. Expanding food democracy, in our view, will require more focused attention to the power of the global food industry and its role in diet-related disease and food insecurity. Intro 1660, the proposal to create a good food purchasing program could be an important step in that direction, changing the practices of the food corporations that sell to the city. Giving communities more authority to regulate predatory marketing of unhealthy food might be another. Among the existing mechanisms that could be used to expand food democracy at the municipal level is the City Charter’s [197-a planning process](#), expanding the role of Community Boards in food planning, and allocating more resources to [participatory budgeting](#). The urban agriculture plan (Intro 1663) could also expand the power of communities to protect urban gardens and farms from development. By using its authority over land use, providing oversight of city agencies, and approving municipal budgets, the City Council can find additional ways to grow both democracy and equity. Giving those most adversely affected by our current food system a clear voice in shaping local and municipal food policies and systems will help to ensure that those who will gain the most from transformation will have a loud and equitable voice in policy making.
3. **Mobilizing Broad and Diverse Coalitions.** Making meaningful changes in food policy will require supporting and mobilizing the diverse constituencies that will benefit from a healthier and more equitable food system: children, seniors, Blacks and Latinos, recent immigrants, people with diabetes, low wage food workers, health care workers, upstate farmers, among many others. In *City Limits*, we recently made the case for [adding food to the Green New Deal menu](#), an example of building new broad and diverse coalitions to advance food policy. Food procurement policies, urban agriculture, and good food jobs strategies are other examples of issues that can build broader, deeper and more powerful coalitions for reform. Substantive changes in food environments will require powerful constituencies that can stand up to special interests. By fostering such mobilization, the City Council can contribute to successful and sustainable implementation of new policies.
4. **Multi-level Food Policy and Planning.** New York City’s food system stretches across the city, the adjacent farming areas in the Hudson Valley and Eastern Long Island and throughout the tristate area. To achieve the goal of food planning that is spelled out in Intros 1654, 1660, and 1664, the city will need to find ways to coordinate and integrate food planning at the municipal

level with planning at the regional and tristate levels. Successful efforts to protect the city's watershed provide a model. The health, economic, and environmental benefits of food planning will be increased by such an approach. We encourage the City Council to consider such multi-level processes that extend beyond changes to the Administrative Code.

5. **Interlinked Legislative and Budget Priorities.** Finally, achieving food equity in New York City will require reallocating the public and private resources that now maintain our inequitable food system. The *Growing Food Equity in New York City* report recognizes some of the first steps in budgetary changes in Fiscal Year 2020 that lead to a fairer food system. For Fiscal Year 2021, the City Council Members who sponsor the proposed food equity laws and resolutions and all those who favor a more equitable food system in New York City should begin now to identify the city and state budgetary changes that will be needed to make meaningful progress towards that goal.

In the coming weeks and months, the Speaker, the City Council and the Mayor will begin to flesh out a timeline for taking action to grow food equity in New York City. The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, in partnership with many other food civil society organizations, offers its academic expertise and research capacities, and the passion and power of CUNY students and faculty, to assist the City Council and the NYC Mayor's Office of Food Policy and the new Office of Urban Agriculture to ensure that 10 years from now, food equity has in fact taken root and grown in New York City and we can celebrate our accomplishments and set new, even more ambitious goals for the coming years.

By Nicholas Freudenberg, Nevin Cohen, Craig Willingham, Jan Poppendieck, and Rositsa T. Ilieva for the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute. The Institute, based at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, provides evidence, analysis and advocacy to solve urban food problems in New York and other cities. For more information contact Nick.Freudenberg@sph.cuny.edu

Read the recent CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute reports on food policy in New York City, available at <https://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/publications>

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Freudenberg, N., Willingham, C., & Cohen, N. (2018). [The Role of Metrics in Food Policy: Lessons from a Decade of Experience in New York City](#). *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 8(B),191-209.

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**Testimony before the New York City Council
in Support of Expanding Deli-Style Cafeterias in Schools
Hearing on September 18, 2019**

Liz Accles, Executive Director, Community Food Advocates

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the City Council's Agenda on Growing Food Equity in New York City. On behalf of Community Food Advocates and the Lunch 4 Learning coalition, we are thrilled to see major expansion of deli-style cafeterias in schools included as a priority.

Students can't learn on an empty stomach, and currently 1 in 5 children in NYC face food insecurity. It is critical that we ensure our school meal programs best meet the needs of our students, and the deli-style, "enhanced" cafeteria is an overwhelmingly successful model. The enhanced cafeterias accommodate older students' need for autonomy, speed-of-service, and a more welcoming dining experience.

The 34 middle school and high school cafeterias—serving 60,000 students—that have received the enhanced cafeteria over the past couple of years have been a huge success.

Among the first set of high schools that were enhanced, our analysis shows:

35% increase in lunch participation

If all high school received the enhancement, we project:

30,000 more high school students would participate

Please see the attached one-pager for additional information, including photos and analysis, of the enhanced cafeterias in NYC schools. We hope the Council will be champions for this important initiative. Thank you.

Liz Accles, Executive Director
Community Food Advocates
Lunch 4 Learning Coalition
110 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005

Transforming the School Meal Experience The Case for A Major Expansion of Enhanced Cafeterias in NYC

The NYC Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) has rolled out an innovative cafeteria redesign in 34 middle school and high school cafeterias—serving 78 individual schools and 60,000 students—throughout the city. The “Cafeteria Enhancement Experience” features deli-style serving lines and student-friendly seating areas (over for photos).

To build on the foundation of universal free school lunch, we are calling on Chancellor Carranza to commit \$150 million in his 5-Year Capital Plan in order to enhance half of all NYC high schools and middle schools.

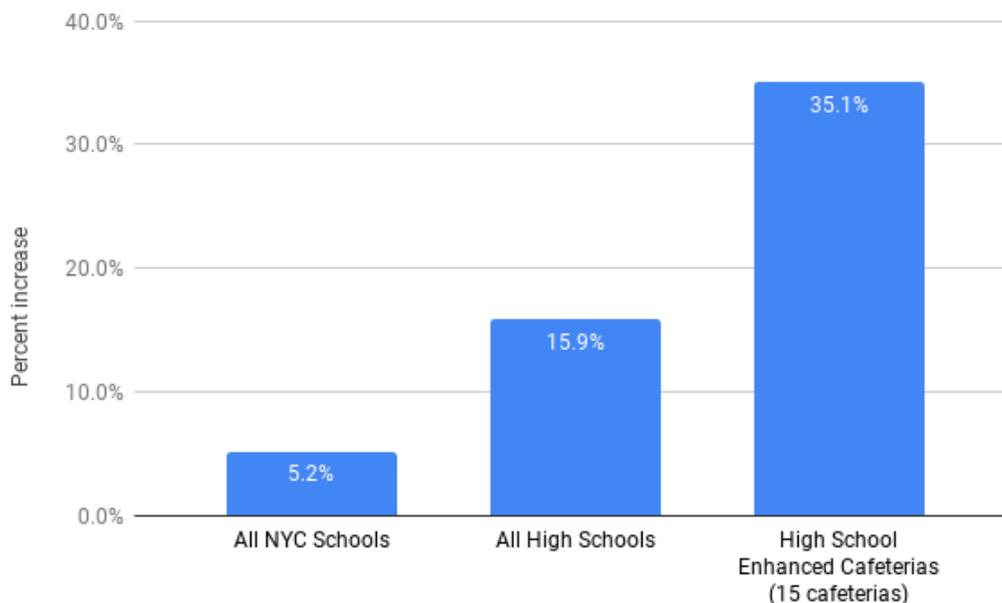
More Fruits and Vegetables Served

Compared with schools of the same type without the redesign, enhanced cafeterias served*:



Higher School Lunch Participation

Our analysis found an increase of 35.1% in lunch participation in the first 15 high schools with enhanced cafeterias in 2018-19, compared to 2016-17, before they were enhanced. If every high school cafeteria in NYC is enhanced, **30,000 more students will be served every day.**



*based on Department of Education Office of Food and Nutrition Services analysis

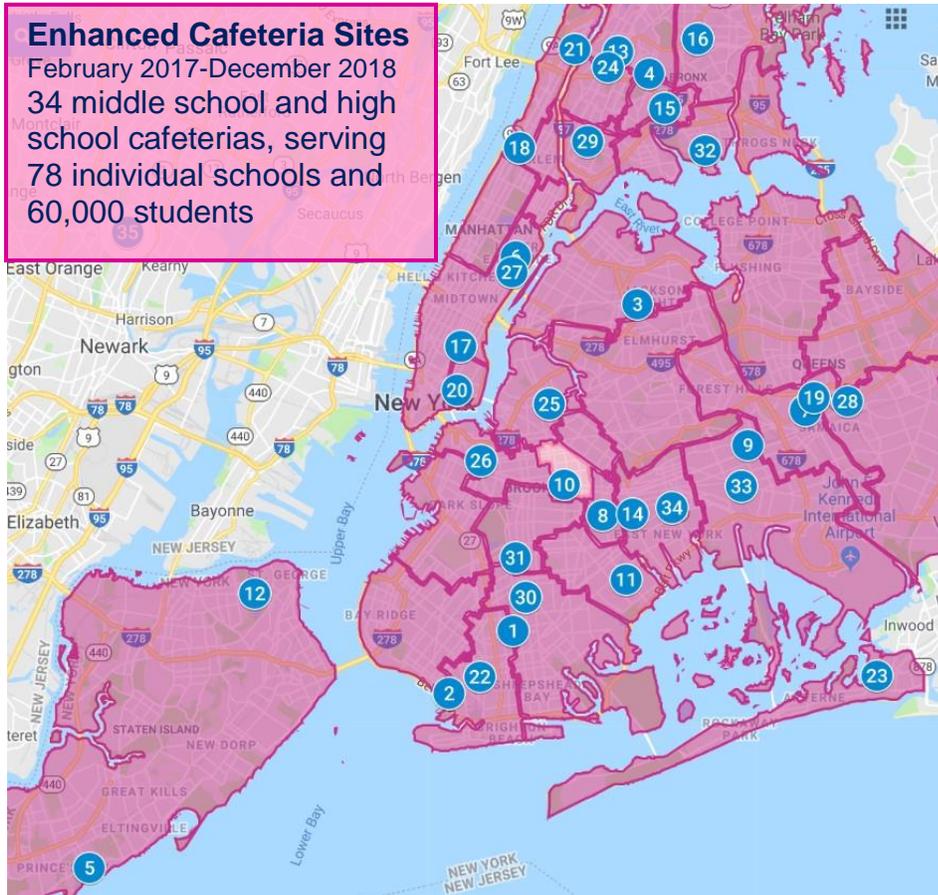
About Enhanced Cafeterias

The new serving line includes more menu options daily, and the presentation dramatically increases the appeal of the food. The lunchrooms are more comfortable and inviting, with diner-style booths and round tables replacing the institutional rectangular tables with benches. Additionally, the Food Court Style serving lines have significantly reduced the time that students stand on line, allowing for more time to eat, socialize and decompress.



Enhanced Cafeteria Sites

February 2017-December 2018
34 middle school and high school cafeterias, serving 78 individual schools and 60,000 students



Community Food Advocates
110 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
communityfoodadvocatesnyc.org



NEW YORK

Testimony before the New York City Council

Committee on Economic Development,

Jointly with the

Committee on General Welfare,

and Committee on Education

September 18, 2019

Submitted by No Kid Hungry New York

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon Chair Vallone, Chair Levin, Chair Treyger and members of the General Welfare, Education and Economic Development Committees of the New York City Council. My name is Rachel Sabella and I am the director of No Kid Hungry New York. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing about some of the bills being considered by the Committees today.

First, we thank the City Council for your steadfast commitment to addressing the issue of hunger and for protecting New Yorkers from dangerous proposals. The City Council has long been a leader in this arena – from championing Breakfast in the Classroom to the expansion of universal school meals to leading the charge for increased, baselined funding for food pantries and soup kitchens to creating food and hygiene pantries in New York City public schools - and we are grateful to count you as our partner in this work.

No Kid Hungry New York is a campaign of Share Our Strength, a national anti-hunger organization dedicated to ending hunger and poverty. Using proven, practical strategies, our No Kid Hungry campaign builds public-private partnerships with the goal of ensuring children have access to the healthy food they need, every day. In addition to our grant-making in all 50 states, we work with governors, state legislators, municipal leaders, and federal policymakers to identify best practices that ensure hungry children have access to healthy meals while they're at school, and when they're out of school.

Contact: Rachel Sabella, Director of No Kid Hungry New York, rsabella@strength.org

Since 2011, our No Kid Hungry New York campaign has helped connect thousands of children across the state with school breakfast and summer meals.

FOOD INSECURITY: THE NEED & WHY IT MATTERS

One in 5 kids in New York City struggles with hunger. Here's what that means: In some families, the pantry is completely empty. In others, mom or dad skips dinner a few nights a week so the kids can have something to eat in the evening. In others, families are making impossible decisions between paying the rent or buying groceries. This has a profound effect on kids and families.

When kids aren't getting the consistent nutrition they need throughout the day and throughout the year, it's harder for them to grow up healthy, happy and strong. Hunger makes it harder to focus in class. Test scores drop, and students are more likely to miss class time because they're in the nurse's office with headaches or stomach aches. Discipline problems rise, while attendance levels fall.

Ensuring that kids get healthy food is the first step on the path out of poverty and in creating a more equitable city for children. When kids get regular healthy meals they do better on tests, have fewer discipline problems, have fewer health problems and are more likely to graduate from high school. School meal programs, like Breakfast in the Classroom, build greater equity among students, ensuring that all kids are starting their day on a level playing field. As federal challenges to anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs threaten access for low-income and immigrant families, New York City should continue to be clear that its leadership will fight to ensure kids have the food they need to succeed.

BILLS BEING CONSIDERED TODAY

No Kid Hungry New York commends Speaker Johnson and the entire New York City Council for taking a major step to advance food policy and end hunger in New York City. While this is a robust package of bills, we will comment on a select few.

Int. No. 1664 - A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to requiring the office of food policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan

This bill allows New York City to create a comprehensive plan to address a range of food related issues such as food insecurity and food equity over the next 10 years. No Kid Hungry New York supports the development of such a plan. We particularly appreciate that the creation of the plan requires input from different external stakeholders. There are many organizations in New York City, New York State and across the country working on child nutrition, food insecurity, food policy, and food access, who have important perspectives to be shared with New York City's leaders. Further, input from external partners also allows for lessons learned in other states and municipalities to be incorporated into this plan. New York City has a long, storied tradition of working closely with non-profits on issues of food insecurity and it is essential that this bill ensures it will continue to happen in the future. No Kid Hungry New York looks forward to contributing to the 10 year food policy plan for New York City.

Int. No. 1666 - A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to the establishment of an office of food policy

The Office of Food Policy can and should play a critical role in anti-hunger and food policy in New York City. No Kid Hungry New York supports this bill and the expansion of the Office. As the federal government weighs changes to food support programs, the New York City Office of Food Policy would represent the important role that these programs play for citizens.

Contact: Rachel Sabella, Director of No Kid Hungry New York, rsabella@strength.org

Further, No Kid Hungry New York would support adding a section 5 to the bill which would state “coordinate regular meetings of representatives from each city agency on food support programs.” The New York City Office of Food Policy is in a position to play a unique role in supporting and expanding access to the many food programs that exist across city agencies. For example, while the Summer Meals program is run through the New York City Department of Education, programs are run in sites led by city agencies including the Department of Youth and Community Development, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Social Services. Requiring regular meetings and coordination by the Office of Food Policy would help to ensure these agencies – as well as every agency that could promote the program – are meeting on a regular basis solely on food issues, and identify ways to streamline interagency and cross-department operations in increasing access and utilization of food support programs.

Int. No. 1675 -- A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the distribution of information regarding summer meals

No Kid Hungry New York supports efforts to expand awareness about the availability of summer meals. This bill would require the expansion of the law to require the Department of Education to mail the list of summer meals sites to every student eligible for free and reduced price lunch as well as include the three closest locations to their home. While time-intensive to create, this information will be helpful to families.

We would recommend inserting the term “in multiple languages” in the bill to ensure language barriers do not keep families from accessing the summer meals program. Further, we recommend amending the language to say “the home address of every student including students that are eligible for the federal free and reduced price lunch program. “ This change ensures every student would receive this information at home. For many families in New York City (and across the United States), an increase of several dollars to their yearly salary could rule them ineligible for free and reduced price meals, yet summer meals are essential to their family’s survival. New York City advertises the program as being available for ALL students so we recommend this mailing be sent to ALL students.

Int. No. 1676 - A Local Law in relation to requiring the department of education to report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service

No Kid Hungry New York is pleased to support the Department of Education’s scratch-cooking initiative. We have previously provided funding to support the upgrade of a Summer Meals truck to support scratch cooking efforts. Through scratch-cooking, the Department of Education is creating new and unique ways to encourage students to take advantage of no-cost child nutrition programs. Further, for some, the concept of scratch cooking helps to break down unfair stereotypes of school meal programs. We support the bill’s goal of collecting additional information about the program as well as acknowledging barriers that would need to be overcome to expand the program.

CONCLUSION

Together, we can end childhood hunger in New York City. No Kid Hungry is working with partners across New York to make sure all kids get the food they need to grow up strong. We stand together to work with you and to ensure all children and their families have access to the food they need.

We know this is a problem we can solve. Thank you to the New York City Council for your continued support and leadership in this battle.

Contact: Rachel Sabella, Director of No Kid Hungry New York, rsabella@strength.org

**Written Testimony on Behalf of Brighter Green at the NYC Council's Hearing before
the Committee on Economic Development Jointly with the Committee on Education and
the Committee on General Welfare**

Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

Martin Rowe, Senior Fellow, Brighter Green

rowe@brightergreen.org

My name is Martin Rowe, and I am a senior fellow at Brighter Green, a New York City–based public policy action tank that works to raise awareness of and encourage policy action on issues that span the environment, animals, and sustainability. I am also on the environmental working group for the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) for New York City, and I would like to thank the three committees for inviting me to testify on this and other initiatives presented today.

Brighter Green urges NYC to adopt the GFPP, joining Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and Washington, DC, among other cities, in embracing GFPP’s holistic approach to food security, food justice, environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and workers’ rights. By offering a baseline assessment of current governmental purchasing practices and timelines and benchmarks for improving them, the GFPP is a flexible but robust framework that encourages competition and best practices, and opens up possibilities for local employment, entrepreneurship, and greater community engagement.

Brighter Green also supports efforts to give the physically and economically disadvantaged greater access to farmers markets and healthy food; to reduce food loss and waste; and to encourage the preservation of green space—touched upon by the Council’s other proposals. We believe these proposals point to a long-overdue and welcome commitment by the City to coordinate its food and agricultural policies across agencies, harnessing the extraordinary engagement and energy shown by many activists throughout New York City working to ensure that everyone has access to green space, green jobs, and healthy and clean food, water, and air.

Brighter Green especially welcomes the GFPP’s commitment to environmental conservation because a decade ago, we, in coalition with a number of other local, regional, and national groups, drafted a Climate “FoodPrint” Resolution (No. 2049), introduced by then–City Councilman Bill de Blasio. In that resolution (<https://brightergreen.org/wp->

content/uploads/2014/12/nyc_foodprint_resolution.pdf), we urged NYC to embed food policy within its climate policies by starting “a citywide initiative that would establish climate-friendly food policies and programs, financial and technical support, a public awareness campaign regarding the City’s food consumption and production patterns, and access to local, fresh, healthy food.” The GFPP is a substantial contribution to this effort; but it is not the whole story.

Since 2009, Hurricane Sandy has illustrated how vulnerable New York City is to once-in-a-century storms that will become more frequent and more severe. Sea levels will rise, and our food-shed and supply routes will grow more vulnerable. As the United Nations and other international bodies have made clear in their reports dating back more than a decade, the production and consumption of animal products (and at a huge scale) are a major contribution to greenhouse gas emissions through over-grazing, land-use change, deforestation, and the growing of monocultures of feed-crops. These reports state categorically that mitigating the worst effects of the climate crisis will not be possible without massively decarbonizing our economies, including the agriculture and food systems, and that whatever strategies we employ, all of us who can will need to produce and consume many fewer animal products.

Brighter Green applauds the Brooklyn Borough President’s recognition of the role that a whole-foods, plant-based diet can play in promoting personal and public health, as well as its potential to reduce the health-care costs that increasingly burden public services and the public purse. We appreciate the GFPP’s acknowledgment that animal welfare can be improved by purchasing fewer meat and dairy products. However, we urge this council to go further. Ten years after the FoodPrint Resolution, New York City has a major opportunity to lead the way in advancing public health, remediating the effects of the climate catastrophe, promoting animal welfare, and cleaning up the environment by integrating a whole-foods, plant-based diet into its climate mitigation and food security plans.

The GFPP is not—indeed, is not designed to be—the endpoint. Adopting it through Intro. 660, however, is an excellent start, and Brighter Green urges the Council to support it.



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Testimony Submitted by
Kate Brashares, Executive Director, Edible Schoolyard NYC
Before The New York City Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on
Education and Committee on General Welfare

Joint Meeting on Growing Food Equity Bills
September 18, 2019

My name is Kate Brashares and I am the Executive Director of Edible Schoolyard NYC. Thank you to Chairpersons Paul Vallone, Mark Treyger and Steven T. Levin as well as the members of the City Council Committees on Economic Development, Education and General Welfare for holding today's joint hearing on legislation to advance food equity in New York City.

Edible Schoolyard NYC's (ESYNYC) mission is to support edible education for every child in New York City. ESYNYC partners with NYC public schools to cultivate healthy students and communities through hands-on cooking and gardening education, transforming children's relationship with food and promoting healthier school environments. ESYNYC currently works directly with 22 schools in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx. In addition to serving NYC public school children, ESYNYC teaches other education professionals how to bring edible education to more students through Professional Development workshops.

Over 1.7 million New Yorkers lack access to healthy food options. This is not just a food issue, it is a complex economic and social problem that reflects issues of structural racism and inequality. Research shows that accessing and affording nutritious food is especially challenging for those living in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color. These disparities in physical and financial access to healthy food are systemic problems caused and exacerbated by public policy. To solve these problems, we need policy solutions that advance food equity like the bills being considered in today's hearing.

We also want to call these Committees' attention to the fact that Congress is currently undertaking efforts to reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act (CNR), which govern the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infant and Children (WIC), and other federal programs that provide food to children and their families. With the largest school district in the nation and a huge constituency of WIC and CACFP participants, New York City can be a very influential voice for positive change within the Child Nutrition Reauthorization. A strong CNR will ensure healthy children who are ready to learn, generate local economic opportunities and strengthen communities. It would also provide an opportunity for federal funding for some of the priorities put forward in the bills in front of these Committees today, including scratch cooking in schools and summer meal programs. As a member of the NYC4CNR coalition, we urge the Speaker and members of the NYC Council to join us in advocating for a strong Child Nutrition Act.





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While we support the passage of all of the bills being considered in today's hearing, we submit this testimony regarding Int.1650, Int. 1654, Int. 1660, Int. 1676, Int. 1664, Int. 1666, and Int. 1663. We urge the City Council to consider the amendments included in the recommendations below.

Int. 1650: In relation to the provision of information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets.

Health bucks is a critical nutrition program for both individuals struggling to afford healthy food as well as local farmers that depend on the program as an important source of income. However, more can be done to support Farmers' Market operators efforts to promote health bucks and increase awareness about how and where it can be used by SNAP participants, especially in immigrant and non-English speaking communities. Therefore we support the passage of Int.1650 with the following amendment:

- Add legislative language that requires DOHMH and HRA to translate information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets into each of the designated city languages both in paper and electronically.

Int. 1654: In relation to neighborhood awareness campaigns regarding farm-to-city projects.

The "Farm-to-City" website created by Speaker Johnson's office is a valuable centralized resource about the many programs being offered by community-based organizations around the city connecting low income individuals with sources of fresh, locally grown healthy food. We believe a public awareness campaign in the five city languages to promote this resource could help more New Yorkers in need with these vital programs. We support the passage of Int. 1654 with the following amendments:

- Add School Gardens, Urban Farms and Community Gardens in the definition of "farm-to-city projects" outlined in the bill. It is useful for community members to know about the existence and location of these programs and can inform parents' decision making when choosing a school for their child. In particular, including School Gardens would support ESYNYC's efforts to promote our gardens to the wider community, helping families to access fresh fruit and vegetables and exposing more children to healthy eating opportunities.
- Link or combine the existing GreenThumb Garden Map housed on the GreenThumb website and the NYC Urban Agriculture portal created by the Department of City Planning, NYC Parks, and the Department of Small Business Services developed as a result of Int. 1661 with the Farm-to-City Food map housed on the NYC Council Website to create one centralized hub for farm-to-city projects to be promoted through public awareness campaigns.
- Add language to ensure the department consults with the community based organizations managing and running projects included in the awareness campaign around messaging and strategies to promote the campaign in neighborhoods and community districts.





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- Maintaining materials regarding farm-to-city projects updated will require resources, especially given that some of these projects operating hours change seasonally and there is significant turn-over within these organizations. We encourage the City Council to appropriate funding for maintaining and updating these resources.

Int. 1663: In relation to establishing an office of urban agriculture and an urban agriculture advisory board.

Urban agriculture has a significant role to play in improving access to healthy food, health outcomes, food literacy, workforce development and food sovereignty in low income communities across New York. Int. 1663 is an important step forward in respecting and supporting the gardeners, farmers and organizations that have been leading this work in New York City for decades. At ESYNYC, we consider school gardens an important component of thriving urban agricultural systems. We believe their unique characteristics and educational responsibilities must be taken into account by any advisory body overseeing the city's urban agriculture.

We urge the City Council to pass Int.1663 with the amendments below.

- Ensure that the Urban Agriculture Advisory Board created by this bill works directly with the new Director of the Office of Urban Agriculture to co-create the Urban Agriculture Plan.
- In section 3, add education to the list of purposes.
- In section 5, add Department of Education and Grow to Learn as offices to consult.
- In section d, related to the creation of an urban agriculture advisory board, add that it would include a member that works on school gardens.

Plan Must Consider Diverse Strategies to Protect and Expand Urban Agriculture

Given the importance and value of urban agriculture and the variety of types of community gardens, including those at schools, we recommend that the Urban Agriculture Plan includes:

- **Solutions to ensure that all existing community gardens are protected by law**, so as not to be under threat by future development and remain spaces for community building, recreation, and food production.
- **Identifies and increases funding and support for workforce development opportunities in urban agriculture, especially for youth** as well as educational opportunities both in curricular day and after-school programming and SYEP opportunities around urban agriculture.
- **Identifies and increases funding and access to health, nutrition, food justice and urban agriculture education and programming** both in curricular day and after school care settings.
- **Promote collective metrics to evaluate the benefits and impacts of urban agriculture in New York City.** We recommend that the city build upon the great work that has already been done through Five Borough Farm, a multi-phased project conducted in partnership with Design Trust for Public Space, Added Value, NYC Parks,





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and Farming Concrete. *Five Borough Farm* offered a roadmap to farmers and gardeners, City officials, and stakeholders to understand and weigh the benefits of urban agriculture, and made a compelling case for closing resource gaps to grow urban agriculture throughout the five boroughs of New York City. The group developed an urban agriculture Data Collection Toolkit as well as a Data Collection Framework that are publicly available.

- **Identifies and increases support for existing programs that ensure greater access to healthy and affordable produce**, as well as additional resources and incentives to procure and distribute local produce. The plan could address the possibility of expanding existing programs such as Health Bucks so that retailers and other alternative Farmer's Market programs such as GrowNYC's Food Box may accept them; Increasing funding for year round programs that incentivize the distribution of affordable and locally grown produce; Increasing resources and technical development for programs such as Shop Healthy NYC and incentivize retail owners and DOE schools to procure fruits and vegetables from local sources.

Ensuring NYC's Urban Agriculture Plan is Equitable and Inclusive

ESYNYC believes the people most impacted by an issue are the best suited to address it and should be meaningfully engaged in the policy making process. Community and nonprofit leaders, diverse families (including families of color, non-English speakers and immigrants), advocates and others should be engaged to ensure that the city's Urban Agriculture plan effectively meets the unique needs of the community. This responsibility should not be taken lightly, and requires intentional commitment and explicit work on a regular and ongoing basis. We urge the City Council to incorporate the following four elements into local law 1663 to ensure accountability and equity in the development and implementation of the plan:

1. **Host and promote community engagement opportunities at all stages of the urban agriculture advisory board's planning and plan development process** — beginning with understanding the community's expectations for the plan. We recommend that the Office of Urban Agriculture be required to identify and document how community stakeholders had been consulted as part of the development of the plan. Potential strategies to engage community voice in the city's urban agriculture plan include the following:
 - Large-Scale Public Meetings or Multi-Stakeholder Forums (open to the public, representatives of different stakeholder groups) for dissemination of information, sharing opinions, and discussion.
 - Meet People Where They Are by going out into the community to ask for feedback. This includes accessible places to find accurate and up-to-date information—online and in community spaces (e.g. libraries, places of worship, health centers, gardening and farming events)
 - Focus Groups, Small Group Meetings to elicit feedback on a particular issue
 - Online Engagement or Written Responses through web-, written-, or email-based feedback or discussion





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- Mass surveys of whole stakeholder groups or a representative sample conducted online, by telephone, or in-person, vetted by task force members
 - Designate Community Liaisons/Leaders to support engagement efforts, including educational events and dissemination of various communications
2. **Provide funding** to coordinate and support the advisory board, community engagement plans and development the urban agriculture plan.
 3. **Regular updates to the plan** are essential and should be required to ensure that the plan continues to address the needs of different urban agriculture and community garden stakeholders over time.

Int. 1664: In relation to requiring the office of food policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan.

Creating a 10 Year Food Policy Plan is an exciting step towards raising the profile and importance of food in the City's legislative agenda, agency programs and operations, funding priorities and future policy plans. It will help make significant progress towards the stated goals of reducing hunger, improving nutrition and healthy food access, reducing waste, supporting farm economies and urban agriculture. However, it is simply not sufficient for the Director of the new Office of Food Policy to consult agencies, CBOs, community leaders and other stakeholders while developing the plan. We support the passage of Int. 1664 with the following recommendations:

- Requires and holds the department accountable for including significant and meaningful ongoing opportunities for community input in the plan development and compensate community members for their time.
- We encourage the city to support the creation of an independent Food Policy Council made up of community based groups, community leaders, and other stakeholders with expertise in food justice, policy, access and insecurity that the Director of the Office of Food Policy would be required to work with and consult in the creation of the 10 Year Food Policy Plan. This council should not be made up of Mayor and Speaker appointees, but rather of community food experts identified through a public open call for nomination process. We also recommend that the Director of this office be required to meet on a regular basis with this Food Policy Council to create more transparency and community input into the work of the Office of Food Policy.
- We also recommend that before the 10 Year Food Policy Plan is finalized, the Office of Food Policy hold a series of accessible community meetings across the five boroughs to hear community input and feedback into the plan. These community meetings can be modelled after the intensive community engagement and participatory planning process designed to support Take Care New York 2020.
- We also recommend that the 10 Year Food Policy Plan include supporting Women and Minority Owned food businesses and social enterprises in its goals to help improve the long term self sufficiency and food sovereignty of low income communities of color across New York City.





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- In the biennial progress reports published by the Office of Food Policy, we encourage the Director to identify opportunities to adapt and enhance the plan to meet City's ever changing needs.

Int. 1666: In relation to the establishment of an office of food policy.

To ensure the permanence of the role of Director of Food Policy and increase support for food policy work in the City of New York, it's important to codify and provide increased staff and capacity for the Office of Food Policy. For these reasons, we support the passage of Int. 1666 with the following amendments:

- If extra responsibilities are added to this office, that additional resources should be allocated to the office by the City Council.
- Create additional opportunities for increasing transparency and community input into the work of this office. Thus, we again encourage the City Council to consider establishing the independent Food Policy Council described above and require that the Director of the Office of Food Policy meet and consult with the council on a regular basis.
- In Section 1, c, 1, adapt language to say "develop and coordinate initiatives to promote access to and education about healthy food for all residents of the city of New York."

Int. 1676: In relation to requiring the department of education to report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service.

Many children live in households with limited access to fresh, healthy, and high quality, nutrient-rich food options. School meal programs can provide children, especially those vulnerable to hunger and diet-related disease, with access to healthful foods. Our research has indicated that 94% of NYC children don't eat enough vegetables and over 40% of New York City public school children are obese or overweight. Cooking food from scratch in schools is a proven effective strategy for increasing the amount of fresh, healthy produce and wholesome food consumed by children. A longitudinal study of nutrition education conducted at P.S./M.S. 7 in East Harlem found that ESYNYC's programming, integrated with scratch cooking provided by cafeteria intervention organization Wellness in the Schools, has had a positive impact on students' fruit and vegetable consumption. One example of an impact of this work is that salad bar consumption at the school increased from zero to 19% over the course of the study. Supported by this data and other healthy eating successes for students in our programs, we support the passage of Int. 1676 with the following amendments:

- Ensure that any progress evaluation or report on DOE's efforts to implement scratch cooking is written by an independent third party, not the Department of Education, which may have challenges evaluating its own scratch cooking pilot. In addition, the report author should consult with the organization Brigade and the school food managers that have been conducting the scratch food cooking pilot in the Bronx.
- Most critically, add clarity to the bill language that like the "Growing Food Equity in NYC" City Council Agenda calls for, the DOE should "create an implementation plan to ensure that every school child has access to scratch-cooked, healthy, delicious, and culturally-appropriate menu items." We recommend that in section 4, legislative language is





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changed to say the report shall include an implementation plan that in addition to identifying barriers, would also identify what resources are required for implementing a city-wide scratch cooking program such as additional resources, staffing, infrastructure, professional development for teachers and/or food service staff, and a reasonable timeline for achieving these plans. This implementation plan should also include resources and plans for ongoing evaluation of the effort.

- Provide the DOE one year to submit this report to the City Council.

Thank you for your time and consideration.





Testimony Submitted by
Gabrielle Blavatsky, Co-Founder and Policy Director, Equity Advocates
Before The New York City Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on
Education and Committee on General Welfare

Joint Meeting on Growing Food Equity Bills

September 18, 2019

My name is Gabrielle Blavatsky and I'm the Co-Founder and Policy Director of Equity Advocates. Thank you to Chairpersons Paul Vallone, Mark Treyger and Steven T. Levin as well as the members of the City Council Committees on Economic Development, Education and General Welfare for holding today's joint hearing on legislation to advance food equity in New York City.

Equity Advocates is working to ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of race or income, can access and afford healthy food. We partner with food access nonprofits across New York and provide them with the tools they need to be more civically engaged, including policy education, advocacy training and coalition building services. Through this work, we are helping to build a non-partisan grassroots coalition of powerful advocates and leaders within the food movement. We are very excited to report that several of our incredible partner organizations, including Children's Aid, Community Food Action at New Settlement Apartments, and Edible Schoolyard NYC are submitting testimony at today's hearing.

Over 1.7 million New Yorkers lack access to healthy food options. This is not just a food issue; it is a complex economic and social problem that reflects issues of structural racism and inequality. Research shows that accessing and affording nutritious food is especially challenging for those living in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color. These disparities in physical and financial access to healthy food are systemic problems caused and exacerbated by public policy. To solve these problems, we need policy solutions that advance food equity like the bills being considered in today's hearing.

We also want to call these Committees' attention to the fact that Congress is currently undertaking efforts to reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act (CNR), which govern the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infant and Children (WIC), and other federal programs that provide food to children and their families. With the largest school district in the nation and a huge constituency of WIC and CACFP participants, New York City can be a very influential voice for positive change

within the Child Nutrition Reauthorization. A strong CNR will ensure healthy children who are ready to learn, generate local economic opportunities and strengthen communities. It would also provide an opportunity for federal funding for some of the priorities put forward in the bills in front of these Committees today, including scratch cooking in schools and summer meal programs. As a leadership organization and co-convener of the NYC4CNR coalition, we urge the Speaker and members of the NYC Council to join us in advocating for a strong Child Nutrition Act.

While we support the passage of all of the bills being considered in today's hearing, we submit this testimony regarding Int.1650, Int. 1654, Int. 1660, Int. 1676, Int. 1664, Int. 1666, and Int. 1663. We urge the City Council to consider the amendments included in the recommendations below.

Int. 1650: In relation to the provision of information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets.

Health bucks is a critical nutrition program for both individuals struggling to afford healthy food as well as local farmers that depend on the program as an important source of income. However, more can be done to support Farmers' Market operators' efforts to promote health bucks and increase awareness about how and where it can be used by SNAP participants, especially in immigrant and non-English speaking communities. Therefore, we support the passage of Int.1650 with the following amendment:

- Add legislative language that requires DOHMH and HRA to translate information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets into each of the designated city languages both in paper and electronically.

Int. 1654: In relation to neighborhood awareness campaigns regarding farm-to-city projects.

The "Farm-to-City" website created by Speaker Johnson's office is a valuable centralized resource about the many programs being offered by community-based organizations around the city connecting low income individuals with sources of fresh, locally grown healthy food. We believe a public awareness campaign in the five city languages to promote this resource could help more New Yorkers in need with these vital programs. We support the passage of Int. 1654 with the following amendments:

- Add School Gardens, Urban Farms and Community Gardens in the definition of "farm-to-city projects" outlined in the bill. It is useful for community members to know about the existence and location of these programs as they are often sources of fresh, local food in areas with limited food access. In addition, informing

community members about school gardens in their neighborhoods, like those operated by Edible Schoolyard NYC, can help inform parents' decision making when choosing a school for their child.

- Link or combine the existing *GreenThumb Garden Map* housed on the GreenThumb website and the NYC Urban Agriculture portal created by the Department of City Planning, NYC Parks, and the Department of Small Business Services developed as a result of Int. 1661 with the *Farm-to-City Food map* housed on the NYC Council website to create one centralized hub for farm-to-city projects to be promoted through public awareness campaigns.
- Ensure the department consults with the community based organizations managing and running projects included in the awareness campaign around messaging and strategies to promote the campaign in neighborhoods and community districts.
- Maintaining materials regarding farm-to-city projects updated will require resources, especially given that some of these projects operating hours change seasonally and there is significant turn-over within these organizations. We encourage the City Council to appropriate funding for maintaining and updating these resources.

Int. 1660: In relation to creating a good food purchasing program.

We support the passage of Int. 1660 with the following amendments:

- Add language in section C regarding the Good Food Purchasing Advisory Board to ensure the voices of direct service providers, agency staff actually responsible for implementing the plan, and the Comptroller's office is represented on the Board.

Int. 1663: In relation to establishing an office of urban agriculture and an urban agriculture advisory board.

Urban agriculture has a significant role to play in improving access to healthy food, health outcomes, food literacy, workforce development and food sovereignty in low income communities across New York. Int. 1663 is an important step forward in respecting and supporting the gardeners, farmers and organizations that have been leading this work in New York City for decades. We urge the City Council to pass Int.1663 with the amendments below.

Establishment of Office of Urban Agriculture and Advisory Board

- In section 3, add "education" to the list of purposes that the office of sustainability and long term planning and relevant agencies must make recommendations on.

- In section 5, add Department of Education and Grow to Learn as offices that the new Office of Urban Agriculture must coordinate with
 - In subsection d, related to the creation of an urban agriculture advisory board, add that it should include a member that works on school gardens.
 - Ensure that the Urban Agriculture Advisory Board created by this bill works directly with the new Director of the Office of Urban Agriculture to co-create the Urban Agriculture Plan.

Urban Agriculture Plan Must Consider Diverse Strategies to Protect and Expand Urban Agriculture

Given the importance and value of urban agriculture and the variety of types of community gardens, including those at schools, we recommend that the Urban Agriculture Plan mentioned in section 4 include:

- **Solutions to ensure that all existing community gardens are protected by law**, so as not to be under threat by future development and remain spaces for community building, recreation, and food production.
- **Identifies and increases funding and support for workforce development opportunities in urban agriculture, especially for youth** as well as educational opportunities both in curricular day and after-school programming and SYEP opportunities around urban agriculture.
- **Identifies and increases funding and access to health, nutrition, food justice and urban agriculture education and programming** both in curricular day and after school care settings.
- **Promote collective metrics to evaluate the benefits and impacts of urban agriculture in New York City.** We recommend that the city build upon the great work that has already been done through *Five Borough Farm*, a multi-phased project conducted in partnership with *Design Trust for Public Space*, *Added Value*, *NYC Parks*, and *Farming Concrete*. *Five Borough Farm* offered a roadmap to farmers and gardeners, City officials, and stakeholders to understand and weigh the benefits of urban agriculture and made a compelling case for closing resource gaps to grow urban agriculture throughout the five boroughs of New York City. The group developed an urban agriculture Data Collection Toolkit as well as a Data Collection Framework that are publicly available.¹

¹Five Borough Farm. Design Trust for Public Space. 2015. <http://designtrust.org/projects/five-borough-farm-ii/activities-and-outputs/>

- **Identifies and increases support for existing programs that ensure greater access to healthy and affordable produce**, as well as additional resources and incentives to procure and distribute local produce. The plan could address the possibility of expanding existing programs such as Health Bucks so that retailers and other alternative Farmer's Market programs such as GrowNYC's Food Box may accept them; Increasing funding for year round programs that incentivize the distribution of affordable and locally grown produce; Increasing resources and technical development for programs such as Shop Healthy NYC and incentivize retail owners and DOE schools to procure fruits and vegetables from local sources.

Ensuring NYC's Urban Agriculture Plan is Equitable and Inclusive

Equity Advocates believes the people most impacted by an issue are the best suited to address it and should be meaningfully engaged in the policy making process. Community and nonprofit leaders, diverse families (including families of color, non-English speakers and immigrants), advocates and others should be engaged to ensure that the city's Urban Agriculture plan effectively meets the unique needs of the community. This responsibility should not be taken lightly and requires intentional commitment and explicit work on a regular and ongoing basis. We urge the City Council to incorporate the following four elements into local law 1663 to ensure accountability and equity in the development and implementation of the plan:

1. **Host and promote community engagement opportunities at all stages of the urban agriculture advisory board's planning and plan development process** — beginning with understanding the community's expectations for the plan. We recommend that the Office of Urban Agriculture be required to identify and document how community stakeholders had been consulted as part of the development of the plan. Potential strategies to engage community voice in the city's urban agriculture plan include the following:
 - Large-Scale Public Meetings or Multi-Stakeholder Forums (open to the public, representatives of different stakeholder groups) for dissemination of information, sharing opinions, and discussion.
 - Meet People Where They Are by going out into the community to ask for feedback. This includes accessible places to find accurate and up-to-date information—online and in community spaces (e.g. libraries, places of worship, health centers, gardening and farming events)
 - Focus Groups, Small Group Meetings to elicit feedback on a particular issue
 - Online Engagement or Written Responses through web-, written-, or email-based feedback or discussion

- Mass surveys of whole stakeholder groups or a representative sample conducted online, by telephone, or in-person, vetted by task force members
 - Designate Community Liaisons/Leaders to support engagement efforts, including educational events and dissemination of various communications
2. **Provide funding** to coordinate and support the advisory board, community engagement plans and development of the urban agriculture plan.
 3. **Regular updates to the plan** are essential and should be required to ensure that the plan continues to address the needs of different urban agriculture and community garden stakeholders over time.

Int. 1664: In relation to requiring the office of food policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan.

Creating a 10 Year Food Policy Plan is an exciting step towards raising the profile and importance of food in the City's legislative agenda, agency programs and operations, funding priorities and future policy plans. It will help make significant progress towards the stated goals of reducing hunger, improving nutrition and healthy food access, reducing waste, supporting farm economies and urban agriculture. However, it is simply not sufficient for the Director of the new Office of Food Policy to consult agencies, CBOs, community leaders and other stakeholders while developing the plan. We support the passage of Int. 1664 with the following recommendations:

- Requires and holds the department accountable for including significant and meaningful ongoing opportunities for community input in the plan development and compensate community members for their time.
- We encourage the city to support the creation of an independent Food Policy Council made up of community based groups, community leaders, and other stakeholders with expertise in food justice, policy, access and insecurity that the Director of the Office of Food Policy would be required to work with and consult in the creation of the 10 Year Food Policy Plan. This council should not be made up of Mayor and Speaker appointees, but rather of community food experts identified through a public open call for nomination process. We also recommend that the Director of this office be required to meet on a regular basis with this Food Policy Council to create more transparency and community input into the work of the Office of Food Policy.
- We also recommend that before the 10 Year Food Policy Plan is finalized, the Office of Food Policy hold a series of accessible community meetings across the five boroughs to hear community input and feedback into the plan. These community

meetings can be modelled after the intensive community engagement and participatory planning process designed to support Take Care New York 2020².

- We also recommend that the 10 Year Food Policy Plan include supporting Women and Minority Owned food businesses and social enterprises in its goals to help improve the long-term self-sufficiency and food sovereignty of low-income communities of color across New York City.
- In the biennial progress reports published by the Office of Food Policy, we encourage the Director to identify opportunities to adapt and enhance the plan to meet City's ever changing needs.

Int. 1666: In relation to the establishment of an office of food policy.

To ensure the permanence of the role of Director of Food Policy and increase support for food policy work in the City of New York, it's important to codify and provide increased staff and capacity for the Office of Food Policy. For these reasons, we support the passage of Int. 1666 with the following amendments:

- If extra responsibilities are added to this office, that additional resources should be allocated to the office by the City Council.
- Create additional opportunities for increasing transparency and community input into the work of this office. Thus, we again encourage the City Council to consider establishing the independent Food Policy Council described above and require that the Director of the Office of Food Policy meet and consult with the council on a regular basis.
- In Section 1, c, 1, adapt language to say "develop and coordinate initiatives to promote access to and education about healthy food for all residents of the city of New York."
- In Section 1, c, 3, adapt language to update the annual food system metrics report to include all agencies' nutrition education-related initiatives. City law currently only requires the city to report nutrition education activities for the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) only. The law should require the City Food Metrics report to include all agency nutrition education initiatives including the Department for the Aging (DFTA), the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

² <https://hesterstreet.org/projects/take-care-new-york-2020-action-planning/>

Int. 1676: In relation to requiring the department of education to report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service.

Many children live in households with limited access to fresh, healthy, and high quality, nutrient-rich food options. School meal programs can provide children, especially those vulnerable to hunger and diet-related disease, with access to healthful foods. According to our partner Edible Schoolyard NYC, 94% of NYC Children don't eat enough vegetables and over 40% of New York City public school children are obese or overweight. Cooking food from scratch in schools is a proven effective strategy for increasing the amount of fresh, healthy produce and wholesome food consumed by children. For these reasons, we support the passage of Int. 1676 with the following amendments:

- Ensure that any progress evaluation or report on DOE's efforts to implement scratch cooking is written by an independent third party, not the DOE. The third-party progress evaluation should be made public in partnership with the DOE.
- Most critically, add clarity to the bill language that like the "Growing Food Equity in NYC" City Council Agenda calls for, the DOE should "create an implementation plan to ensure that every school child has access to scratch-cooked, healthy, delicious, and culturally-appropriate menu items." We recommend the following specific amendments:
 - In Section 1, b. Adapt language to: "No later than 180 days after the effective date of this local law, the department shall "prepare and submit to the mayor, the speaker of the council, and post on the department's website, a plan" to implement scratch-cooked food service in all schools in the city school district of the city of New York "in the next ten years or fewer".
 - In Section 1, b, subsections, make it clear that such "plan" shall:
 - Identify the necessary equipment, infrastructure, supplies, labor, training, promotion, and food costs;
 - Describe the potential role of external providers and partners;
 - Identify procedures and metrics that will be used to measure successful implementation;
 - Describe how community members were involved with creating this plan;
 - Identify "barriers to" the department's ability to implement a city-wide scratch-cooked food service program that incorporates culturally appropriate meals and age-appropriate "food and nutrition education", "and suggest potential ways to overcome these barriers."

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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Testimony Submitted by

Taisy Conk, Program Director, Community Food Action at New Settlement Apartments
Before The New York City Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on
Education and Committee on General Welfare

Joint Meeting on Growing Food Equity Bills

September 18, 2019

My name is Taisy Conk and I am the Program Director of Community Food Action at New Settlement Apartments. Thank you to Chairpersons Paul Vallone, Mark Treyger and Steven T. Levin as well as the members of the City Council Committees on Economic Development, Education and General Welfare for holding today's joint hearing on legislation to advance food equity in New York City.

New Settlement Apartments is a 30-year-old settlement house with a demonstrated commitment to affordable housing and community development in the Southwest Bronx. Grounded in our commitment to affordable housing and a thriving neighborhood, New Settlement Apartments collaborates with community residents and develops partnerships to create services and opportunities that celebrate the inherent dignity and potential of individuals and families. New Settlement's Community Food Action is a comprehensive and cross-disciplinary food justice program in the Mt. Eden neighborhood. Community Food Action's vision is an alternative food system, by and for communities, that nourishes the people and supports community development, climate protection efforts, and quality.

Over 1.7 million New Yorkers lack access to healthy food options. This is not just a food issue. It is a complex economic and social problem that reflects issues of structural racism and inequality. Research shows that accessing and affording nutritious food is especially challenging for those living in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color. These disparities in physical and financial access to healthy food are systemic problems caused and exacerbated by public policy. To solve these problems, we need policy solutions that advance food equity like the bills being considered in today's hearing.



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We also want to call these Committees' attention to the fact that Congress is currently undertaking efforts to reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act (CNR), which govern the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infant and Children (WIC), and other federal programs that provide food to children and their families. With the largest school district in the nation and a huge constituency of WIC and CACFP participants, New York City can be a very influential voice for positive change within the Child Nutrition Reauthorization. A strong CNR will ensure healthy children who are ready to learn, generate local economic opportunities and strengthen communities. It would also provide an opportunity for federal funding for some of the priorities put forward in the bills in front of these Committees today, including scratch cooking in schools and summer meal programs. As a member of the NYC4CNR coalition, we urge the Speaker and members of the NYC Council to join us in advocating for a strong Child Nutrition Act.

While we support the passage of all of the bills being considered in today's hearing, we submit this testimony regarding Int.1650, Int. 1654, Int. 1660, Int. 1676, Int. 1664, Int. 1666, and Int. 1663. We urge the City Council to consider the amendments included in the recommendations below.

Int. 1650: In relation to the provision of information regarding the Health Bucks program and farmers markets.

Health bucks is a critical nutrition program for both individuals struggling to afford healthy food as well as local farmers that depend on the program as an important source of income. However, more can be done to support Farmers' Market operators' efforts to promote health bucks and increase awareness about how and where it can be used by SNAP participants, especially in immigrant and non-English speaking communities.

Therefore we support the passage of Int.1650 with the following amendment:

- Add legislative language that requires DOHMH and HRA to translate information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets into each of the designated city languages both in paper and electronically.

Int. 1654: In relation to neighborhood awareness campaigns regarding farm-to-city projects.

The "Farm-to-City" website created by Speaker Johnson's office is a valuable centralized resource about the many programs being offered by community-based organizations



around the city connecting low income individuals with sources of fresh, locally grown healthy food. We believe a public awareness campaign in the five city languages to promote this resource could help more New Yorkers in need with these vital programs. We support the passage of Int. 1654 with the following amendments:

- Add School Gardens, Urban Farms and Community Gardens in the definition of “farm-to-city projects” outlined in the bill. It is useful for community members to know about the existence and location of these programs and can inform parents’ decision making when choosing a school for their child. In our work with community members it is just as powerful to expose them to large scale farms upstate as to the refuges and oases that are gardens in their own community. Often, exposure to nature and growing in daily life is the most meaningful in connecting community members to real food. School and community gardens are a key part of the diaspora that together make up farm to city projects and should be messaged accordingly.
- Link or combine the existing GreenThumb Garden Map housed on the GreenThumb website and the NYC Urban Agriculture portal created by the Department of City Planning, NYC Parks, and the Department of Small Business Services developed as a result of Int. 1661 with the Farm-to-City Food map housed on the NYC Council Website to create one centralized hub for farm-to-city projects to be promoted through public awareness campaigns.
- Add language to ensure the department consults with the community-based organizations managing and running projects included in the awareness campaign around messaging and strategies to promote the campaign in neighborhoods and community districts. Community Food Action is both acutely aware of gaps in knowledge among community members about seasonal and local foods and also has a depth of experience conducting food education in a variety of settings. City efforts should be aligned with the work happening on the ground. Community-based organizations have much expertise to share around effective strategies and key messaging.
- Maintaining materials regarding farm-to-city projects updated will require resources, especially given that some of these projects operating hours change seasonally and there is significant turn-over within these organizations. We encourage the City Council to appropriate funding for maintaining and updating these resources.

Int. 1660: In relation to creating a good food purchasing program.

We support the passage of Int. 1660 with the following amendments:

- Add language in section C regarding the Good Food Purchasing Advisory Board to ensure the voices of direct service providers, agency staff actually responsible for implementing the plan, and the Comptroller's office is represented on the Board.

Int. 1663: In relation to establishing an office of urban agriculture and an urban agriculture advisory board.

Urban agriculture has a significant role to play in improving access to healthy food, health outcomes, food literacy, workforce development and food sovereignty in low income communities across New York. Int. 1663 is an important step forward in respecting and supporting the gardeners, farmers and organizations that have been leading this work in New York City for decades. Community Food Action engages with school gardens by managing garden development, coordinating usage and maintenance by the school community, and using school gardens as an educational setting for lessons with parents and students. We also lead youth education and engagement in partnership with local community gardens. We urge the City Council to pass Int.1663 with the amendments below.

- Ensure that the Urban Agriculture Advisory Board created by this bill works directly with the new Director of the Office of Urban Agriculture to co-create the Urban Agriculture Plan.
- In section 3, add education to the list of purposes.
- In section 5, add Department of Education and Grow to Learn as offices to consult.
- In section d, related to the creation of an urban agriculture advisory board, add that it would include a member that works on school gardens.

Plan Must Consider Diverse Strategies to Protect and Expand Urban Agriculture

Given the importance and value of urban agriculture and the variety of types of community gardens, including those at schools, we recommend that the Urban Agriculture Plan includes:

- **Solutions to ensure that all existing community gardens are protected by law,** so as not to be under threat by future development and remain spaces for community building, recreation, and food production.



- **Identifies and increases funding and support for workforce development opportunities in urban agriculture, especially for youth** as well as educational opportunities both in curricular day and after-school programming and SYEP opportunities around urban agriculture.
- **Identifies and increases funding and access to health, nutrition, food justice and urban agriculture education and programming** both in curricular day and after school care settings.
- **Promote collective metrics to evaluate the benefits and impacts of urban agriculture in New York City.** We recommend that the city build upon the great work that has already been done through *Five Borough Farm*, a multi-phased project conducted in partnership with *Design Trust for Public Space*, *Added Value, NYC Parks*, and *Farming Concrete*. *Five Borough Farm* offered a roadmap to farmers and gardeners, City officials, and stakeholders to understand and weigh the benefits of urban agriculture, and made a compelling case for closing resource gaps to grow urban agriculture throughout the five boroughs of New York City. The group developed an urban agriculture Data Collection Toolkit as well as a Data Collection Framework that are publicly available.¹
- **Identifies and increases support for existing programs that ensure greater access to healthy and affordable produce**, as well as additional resources and incentives to procure and distribute local produce. The plan could address the possibility of increasing funding for year round programs that incentivize the distribution of affordable and locally grown produce and incentivize retail owners and DOE schools to procure fruits and vegetables from local sources.

Ensuring NYC's Urban Agriculture Plan is Equitable and Inclusive

Community Food Action believes the people most impacted by an issue are the best suited to address it and should be meaningfully engaged in the policy making process.

Community and nonprofit leaders, diverse families (including families of color, non-English speakers and immigrants), advocates and others should be engaged to ensure that the city's Urban Agriculture plan effectively meets the unique needs of the community. This responsibility should not be taken lightly, and requires intentional commitment and explicit work on a regular and ongoing basis. We urge the City Council to incorporate the following

¹Five Borough Farm. Design Trust for Public Space. 2015. <http://designtrust.org/projects/five-borough-farm-ii/activities-and-outputs/>



four elements into local law 1663 to ensure accountability and equity in the development and implementation of the plan:

1. **Host and promote community engagement opportunities at all stages of the urban agriculture advisory board’s planning and plan development process** — beginning with understanding the community’s expectations for the plan. We recommend that the Office of Urban Agriculture be required to identify and document how community stakeholders had been consulted as part of the development of the plan. Potential strategies to engage community voice in the city’s urban agriculture plan include the following:
 - Large-Scale Public Meetings or Multi-Stakeholder Forums (open to the public, representatives of different stakeholder groups) for dissemination of information, sharing opinions, and discussion.
 - Meet People Where They Are by going out into the community to ask for feedback. This includes accessible places to find accurate and up-to-date information—online and in community spaces (e.g. libraries, places of worship, health centers, gardening and farming events)
 - Focus Groups, Small Group Meetings to elicit feedback on a particular issue
 - Online Engagement or Written Responses through web-, written-, or email-based feedback or discussion
 - Mass surveys of whole stakeholder groups or a representative sample conducted online, by telephone, or in-person, vetted by task force members
 - Designate Community Liaisons/Leaders to support engagement efforts, including educational events and dissemination of various communications
2. **Provide funding** to coordinate and support the advisory board, community engagement plans and development of the urban agriculture plan.
3. **Regular updates to the plan** are essential and should be required to ensure that the plan continues to address the needs of different urban agriculture and community garden stakeholders over time.

Int. 1664: In relation to requiring the office of food policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan.

Creating a 10 Year Food Policy Plan is an exciting step towards raising the profile and importance of food in the City's legislative agenda, agency programs and operations, funding priorities and future policy plans. It will help make significant progress towards the stated goals of reducing hunger, improving nutrition and healthy food access, reducing waste, supporting farm economies and urban agriculture. However, it is simply not sufficient for the Director of the new Office of Food Policy to consult agencies, CBOs, community leaders and other stakeholders while developing the plan. We support the passage of Int. 1664 with the following recommendations:

- Requires and holds the department accountable for including significant and meaningful ongoing opportunities for community input in the plan development and compensate community members for their time.
- We encourage the city to support the creation of an independent Food Policy Council made up of community based groups, community leaders, and other stakeholders with expertise in food justice, policy, access and insecurity that the Director of the Office of Food Policy would be required to work with and consult in the creation of the 10 Year Food Policy Plan. This council should not be made up of Mayor and Speaker appointees, but rather of community food experts and local activists identified through a public open call for nomination process. We also recommend that the Director of this office be required to meet on a regular basis with this Food Policy Council to create more transparency and community input into the work of the Office of Food Policy. Too often, decisions are disproportionately influenced by those with relationships and proximity to decision makers. The Office should strategize how to engage and enable the participation of organizations and groups that typically do not have the capacity to engage in city level advocacy and coordination efforts.
- We also recommend that before the 10 Year Food Policy Plan is finalized, the Office of Food Policy hold a series of accessible community meetings across the five boroughs to hear community input and feedback into the plan. These community meetings can be modelled after the intensive community engagement and participatory planning process designed to support Take Care New York 2020². In order to facilitate representation by the groups most affected by inequities in food, participation barriers should be decreased by providing childcare, transportation support, and meals at any events.

² <https://hesterstreet.org/projects/take-care-new-york-2020-action-planning/>



- We also recommend that the 10 Year Food Policy Plan include supporting Women and Minority Owned food businesses and social enterprises such as cooperatives in its goals to help improve the long term self-sufficiency and food sovereignty of low income communities of color across New York City.
- In the biennial progress reports published by the Office of Food Policy, we encourage the Director to identify opportunities to adapt and enhance the plan to meet City's ever-changing needs.

Int. 1666: In relation to the establishment of an office of food policy.

To ensure the permanence of the role of Director of Food Policy and increase support for food policy work in the City of New York, it's important to codify and provide increased staff and capacity for the Office of Food Policy. For these reasons, we support the passage of Int. 1666 with the following amendments:

- If extra responsibilities are added to this office, that additional resources should be allocated to the office by the City Council.
- Create additional opportunities for increasing transparency and community input into the work of this office. Thus, we again encourage the City Council to consider establishing the independent Food Policy Council described above and require that the Director of the Office of Food Policy meet and consult with the council on a regular basis. Given that transparency and participatory practices are a high priority for us, we urge the Council to consider the proven engagement capabilities of agencies and offices when deciding in which agency the Office should sit.
- In Section 1, c, 1, adapt language to say "develop and coordinate initiatives to promote access to and education about healthy food for all residents of the city of New York."
- In Section 1, c, 3, adapt language to update the annual food system metrics report to include all agencies' nutrition education-related initiatives. City law currently only requires the city to report nutrition education activities for the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) only. The law should require the City Food Metrics report to include all agency nutrition education initiatives including the Department for the Aging (DFTA), the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Int. 1676: In relation to requiring the department of education to report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service.

Many children live in households with limited access to fresh, healthy, and high quality, nutrient-rich food options. School meal programs can provide children, especially those vulnerable to hunger and diet-related disease, with access to healthful foods. According to Edible Schoolyard NYC, 94% of NYC Children don't eat enough vegetables and over 40% of New York City public school children are obese or overweight. Common concerns we hear from students are that foods are served partially frozen and that the contents of dishes cannot be ascertained. Scratch cooking would make these issues irrelevant. Cooking food from scratch in schools is a proven effective strategy for increasing the amount of fresh, healthy produce and wholesome food consumed by children. For these reasons, we support the passage of Int. 1676 with the following amendments:

- Ensure that any progress evaluation or report on DOE's efforts to implement scratch cooking is written by an independent third party, not the DOE. The third-party progress evaluation should be made public in partnership with the DOE.
- Most critically, add clarity to the bill language that like the "Growing Food Equity in NYC" City Council Agenda calls for, the DOE should "create an implementation plan to ensure that every school child has access to scratch-cooked, healthy, delicious, and culturally-appropriate menu items." We recommend the following specific amendments:
 - In Section 1, b. Adapt language to: "No later than 180 days after the effective date of this local law, the department shall "prepare and submit to the mayor, the speaker of the council, and post on the department's website, a plan" to implement scratch-cooked food service in all schools in the city school district of the city of New York "in the next ten years or fewer".
 - In Section 1, b, subsections, make it clear that such "plan" shall:
 - Identify the necessary equipment, infrastructure, supplies, labor, training, promotion, and food costs;
 - Describe the potential role of external providers and partners;
 - Identify procedures and metrics that will be used to measure successful implementation;
 - Describe how community members were involved with creating this plan;



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- Identify “barriers to” the department’s ability to implement a city-wide scratch-cooked food service program that incorporates culturally appropriate meals and age-appropriate “food and nutrition education”, “and suggest potential ways to overcome these barriers.”

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony in Support of Int 1653

Caroline Sheehan, student

CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy

Currently, the only data on community gardens that the City collects and releases to the public is 1. the number of community gardens, and 2. whether or not they engage in food production. By passing this legislation, the city can begin to better understand the depth of resources that community gardens provide to the public. Research shows that gardens provide benefits across no fewer than eleven different domains. These include not just the benefits listed in the “Growing Food Equity” report, but also crime prevention, leisure and recreation, facilitation of community organizing around other issues, and more.

We measure what matters. Do economic development, nutritious food, and engaged citizens matter to us? New York City has been a pioneer in so many other domains of social welfare and community engagement. We can now become pioneers in quantifying and evaluating the impact of community gardens, and through that maximize their potential. By gathering this data, we can harness the power of urban agriculture for promoting healthy eating, fighting climate change, and boosting economic activity.

With regard to previous testimony raising concerns about selling produce in community gardens and issues surrounding concessions permits, etc., I urge the council to consider amending the bill to evaluate that component separately if needed, and pass legislation allowing for measurement of community garden outputs.

I express my support for this bill, and thank you for considering this support.



Invited Testimony to New York City Council, Joint Committee Hearing on Food Policy,
September 18, 2019

Dear Council Members –

Thank you to the New York City Council for allowing us to provide testimony regarding a series of food policy proposals under consideration. We are especially appreciative of the fact that the hearings on these proposals are being jointly convened by the Committees on Economic Development, Education, and General Welfare; this collaborative approach to issues of food policy is very much aligned with our comments to the committees. Our comments today speak most specifically to our endorsement of Int 1666, the creation of an office of food policy, and Int 1664, requiring that same office to formulate a 10-year food-policy plan. While we do not speak specifically to the other policies under consideration, we believe an office of food policy and a 10-year plan would allow for more thoughtful assessment of each of these ideas. An office of food policy and the process of creating a 10-year plan would allow for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to making these policy decisions, better recognizing the multi-sectoral dimensions of food policy and its impacts. Further, the establishment of a food policy office and the process of creating of a 10-year plan would permit the findings from new and emerging research on food polices to be used to make better informed policy decisions. Finally, an office on food policy and the creation of a 10-year plan can help to ensure better community engagement by making clear where residents of New York City and the organizations that serve them can go to speak to issues of food policy that extend beyond the reach of any single city agency.

While we are both senior faculty in New York University Steinhardt School's Program in Food Studies, our path into this work is far from the same. One of us, Carolyn Dimitri, PhD, is an economist who worked for many years at the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture before joining the NYU faculty. She has conducted substantial research in the realm of agriculture and organic farming. Beth Weitzman, PhD, has spent her career at NYU; she has held faculty appointments at the Wagner School of Public Service, as well as at the Steinhardt School. Her research has focused on the relationship of public policy to health within poor communities, including a substantial body of work focused specifically on the needs of homeless populations. Despite the differences in our professional backgrounds and foci, we are both increasingly engaged in questions of how policies, at the state and local levels, can be used to enhance the food environment to the betterment of the health of both people and the planet on which they live. We are currently engaged in evaluations of policies and programs in New York City and New York State. Our comments reflect the knowledge and expertise we have gained in this work over recent years both nationally and locally.

It is not easy to define what falls under the food policy umbrella. The food system begins with agriculture and ends with waste disposition. Of course, between those two ends, we find manufacturing, packaging, distribution, sales, preparation and consumption. In essence, food policy is found in all public policies, since myriad sectors influence how and what is ultimately grown, eaten, and wasted in the United States and in New York City. Too often, food policy is narrowly understood as focusing on the things that most directly and proximately shape what is sold and eaten within our neighborhoods, communities and schools. Decisions about school food services, super market siting, and SNAP are all recognized as key to food policy. Yet, the influence of decisions about land use, the minimum wage, public transportation, and technology may not be recognized as, also, salient to the food system. Services such as Fresh Direct and Amazon, for example, have upended our understanding of the relationship of food access to geography. We have seen the importance of minimum wage laws to food workers, as well to the owners of family-owned food stores and restaurants that are key to our city's economy. It is our opinion that an office of food policy can break down the silos that make it difficult to meaningfully improve our food systems in New York City by seeking to identify how decisions across agencies may serve to enhance or detract from our food environment.

Further, decisions made in regard to food policy typically have impacts well beyond what is consumed and, even, what is wasted. Policies to encourage supermarket siting in underserved communities may have been intended to improve diets through access to healthier foods; instead it seems to have improved the economic health of the targeted communities. Free breakfast in the schools may have been intended to improve childhood nutrition and development but it has impacts on daily attendance. SNAP and other financial supports for food purchases aim to help people purchase needed and better foods yet they also may reduce the risk of other consequences of poverty such as eviction. Restaurant grading was intended to reduce food borne illness but it also has had an impact on the public's confidence in small, independent food outlets. An office of food policy can provide policy makers across the spectrum of city agencies with a better understanding of how the impacts of policies focused on the food environment may be felt in areas far removed from food sales or consumption.

In truth, research and evidence regarding the impacts of food policies on such outcomes represents a new and emerging area of study. Economists have long studied the agricultural sector, just as health scientists and nutritionists have long considered the role of food on health and well-being. But, it is only recently, that the impact of a wider array of policies, especially at the state and local levels, have come under the careful scrutiny of the research community. In our own research, we have evaluated the impact of required calorie labels on fast food purchases, efforts to engage local organizations in improving food access and residents' diets, and the distribution of financial support for the increased use of greenmarkets. Throughout this work, we are reminded that "common sense" solutions do not always stand up to scientific scrutiny and that making change in people's behaviors, however well intentioned, does not always unfold as expected. As stronger evidence emerges about food policies and their impacts, we can begin to create more nuanced and more effective policy decisions. To this end, we want to stress the importance of researchers and the research community to the formulation of a 10-year plan and to the office of food policy, more generally. This community

can bring current and emerging evidence to the table, increasing the likelihood of greater programmatic and policy success.

Finally, we want to underscore the importance of having a public face for food policy. Community residents and community serving organizations are often in the best position to see local challenges and to identify local solutions. But, if these challenges or solutions cross agency lines, it can be especially difficult for local agents to move forward and make their voices heard. An office of food policy can be the place for that engagement on food issues and then serves to direct informational "traffic" to the most relevant agencies. We should not leave it to residents to try to figure out the arcane system of agency responsibilities. If they have an issue that is food related, they should not be asked to guess whether the right point of pressure is the Health Department or the Small Business Administration or the Land Use committee.

We hope you will consider our comments. We are available to answer any questions or discuss further the proposals at hand.

Thank you.



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Jack C. Wurm, Jr., *Secretary-Treasurer*
Joseph Dorismond, *Recorder*

Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union

**New York City Council
Testimony Regarding Intro 1660
In relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program
September 18th, 2019**

My name is Lawrence Ben and I am the Political Coordinator for the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, RWDSU. We represent over 100,000 workers primarily in retail, food processing, and other low wage sectors, including thousands of workers in the food supply chain. We are also a member of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition.

I want to thank Councilmember Cohen for introducing the Good Food Purchasing Program legislation and for the leadership of Speaker Johnson on growing food equity in New York City. I would also like to thank the Chairs of the Committees on Economic Development, Education, and General Welfare for holding this joint hearing.

Procurement is decidedly not an appealing topic. Yet, it merits our close attention given that our agencies spend billions of dollars each year procuring goods and services to make our city run. In the context of “lowest responsible bidder” standards, the City should not support a race to the bottom among our suppliers. Instead, we should use our purchasing power to raise the floor for suppliers, and one such area to begin this effort is in our food procurement.

The RWDSU represents thousands of workers in the meat and poultry processing industry in the United States. As you may know, this industry is fraught with labor abuses, workplace injuries, abuses of immigrant workers, and union representation often makes all the difference for workers in this industry. And, this is the food that we serve to our school children, our homeless residents, and other vulnerable populations. Food procurement reform should be the foundation for how New York City leads with its values, and the Good Food Purchasing Program moves us in the right direction.

We encourage you to pay particular attention to transparency in food procurement. The public should be informed of detailed information on who we procure food from: facility address, whether or not the workers are represented by a union, history of labor violations and workplace injuries, as well as information relevant to other key areas like environmental sustainability. This information will allow procurement officers to make appropriate decisions on which bids present the best value to our city, but also allow communities and advocates to hold suppliers throughout the food supply chain accountable. Reforming food procurement is low-hanging fruit, so to speak, and we hope to see meaningful reform soon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



New York City – Intro. 1660 - Good Food Purchasing Program

Jeff Doyle

US Head of Food Business

Compassion in World Farming

TESTIMONY: Joint Hearing held by the NYC Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Education and the Committee on General Welfare

DATE: September 18, 2019

My name is Jeff Doyle and I am a New Yorker and the US Head of Food Business for Compassion in World Farming. On behalf of CIWF, I would like to thank the Economic Development Committee Chair Councilman, Paul Vallone, for sponsoring this critical bill, as well as Councilman Andy Cohen and all members of the Committee on Economic Development for understanding and acknowledging its importance.

For more than 50 years, CIWF has been dedicated to ending factory farming and embracing a more humane, sustainable farming method. We work with food companies to create policies that promote higher farmed animal welfare and agricultural sustainability. Therefore, it is no surprise that we now lend our support to the passage of Intro 1660.

In simplest terms, Intro 1660 promotes five value areas that would not only benefit NYC, but across the state, from animals to consumers to workers to farmers. Research shows that 74% of vendors in NYC buy locally sourced products and 75% report having some kind of social responsibility policy in place. This indicates that these vendors and their consumers already care about these issues. There has also been a definitive public shift toward consumers' increased interest in farmed animal welfare. In order to practice farming that is done sustainably and results in healthier and higher nutrition products it must also include higher welfare for farmed animals.

The five value areas of Intro 1660 work in concert. Obtaining food products from entities that are a more healthful, high quality product will be accomplished only when sustainable farming practices are in place, accompanied by higher farmed animal welfare practices and overseen by a workforce that is valued and respected. In consideration of the already existing policies in place and the relevant market of NYC which is valued at more than \$820,000,000, NYC is in a position to leverage its market power to insist on higher animal welfare, more sustainable food, and valued workforce conditions at a lower cost.

A dozen cities and/or public entities have already adopted the Good Food Purchasing Policy and those programs continue to expand. In the city of New York, we pride ourselves at being at the forefront of environmental protection and the promotion of social justice. Adopting Intro 1660 exemplifies the epitome of who we are and what we want our city to represent.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate Compassion in World Farming's support of Intro 1660. Thank you so much.

Int. No. 1676

By Council Members Rosenthal and Kallos

The Scratch-Cooking Implementation Bill

A Local Law in relation to requiring the department of education to study and implement scratch-cooked school food service for all public school children throughout New York City.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Scratch-Cooked School Food Service. a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Department. The term “department” means the department of education.

Scratch-cooked food service. The term “scratch-cooked food service” refers to cooking that uses fresh, whole ingredients to prepare meals that capture original flavors. The term includes the use of ready-made “speed scratch” products, such as broths, pre-peeled and pre-sliced fruits and vegetables, doughs, pastas, breads, to be used with fresh ingredients. Ready-made “speed-scratch” products should be “clean label” and contain few to no preservatives, no artificial ingredients or synthetic chemicals.

b. No later than 180 days after the effective date of this local law, the department shall submit to the speaker of the council a report regarding its plan to implement scratch-cooked food service in all schools in the city school district of the city of New York. The report must outline all processes necessary so that scratch-cooking is achieved city-wide within five years. Such report shall:

1. Describe the school-based kitchen infrastructure changes, including cost of such changes, required to implement scratch-cooking through New York City public schools. This should include creation of dry and cold storage, purchasing of cooking equipment, ovens and stoves, installation of Ansel systems and the like. The report shall also cost out alternatives to kitchen upgrades, such as a hub-and-spoke model, and the construction of central kitchens, so that the most cost-effective plan can be adopted.

2. Describe in detail the staff training and culinary development programming and related costs of such programming required to support the implementation of scratch-cooking city wide. This should include recipe training, hands-on culinary training and development occurring prior to the school year regular, ongoing hands-on training during the school year to ensure food is prepared well and to ensure that staff is well-trained and well informed in advance of menu changes;
3. Describe the department's efforts, including, but not necessarily limited to, those made in partnership with any external provider, to implement scratch-cooked food service in schools, including a list of the schools in which such efforts have been made, a list of any such external providers, and an assessment of the effect of such efforts on participation in, and satisfaction with, school food services and waste of school-provided food;
4. Describe the department's efforts to accommodate the special dietary needs of participants of scratch-cooked food service, including the department's consideration of the cultural customs of food service participants in meal planning;
5. Describe the department's efforts to provide age-appropriate food and nutrition education and marketing and promotion to students, in particular in connection with scratch-cooked food service, toward the goal of improving students' understanding of the role of nutrition in physical and mental health;
6. Identify barriers, if any, to the department's ability to implement a city-wide scratch-cooked food service program that incorporates culturally appropriate meals and age-appropriate nutrition education.
7. Include a budget and cost analysis that summarizes the additional costs including infrastructure, labor, food, and training, to implement this program on an annual basis.

8. Provide a detailed road map of the scratch-cooking programs roll-out with interim target dates so that scratch-cooking is achieved across all public schools within five years of submission of this plan;

§ 2. New school construction. Any new school construction must be built with appropriate kitchen infrastructure, including Ansel systems, so that all new cafeterias can support scratch cooking model.

§ 3. This local law takes effect immediately and is deemed repealed 120 days after submission of the report required by section 1 of this local law.

NC
LS #9122
7/10/19



TESTIMONY BEFORE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

Joint Meeting of the Education, General Welfare,
and Economic Development Committees

September 18th, 2019

My name is Andrea Strong. I am a [journalist](#), and mother of two elementary-aged public school children, and the founder of the [NYC Healthy School Food Alliance](#), an advocacy organization working to revolutionize school food and food education in New York City. We are advocating for four policy changes which would ensure that the DOE (1) moves away from serving children highly-processed meals and instead prepares scratch-cooked meals, (2) brings nutrition and food education to every grade beginning in Pre-K, (3) plants culinary gardens at every school and (4) increases the duration that all children have to eat their lunches and play at recess to one full hour.

I started doing this work last year, after growing impatient watching obesity rates rise and health disparities widen. And that's why I am here today to testify in favor of Speaker Corey Johnson's [Growing Food Equity in New York City](#) policy agenda. His platform is inspiring and unparalleled in its scope. The policies contained in the 16 bills we heard today will change the way children are fed for generations, and how they learn about food and nutrition, forming healthy habits for a lifetime. We are in the beginning stages, but with the Speaker's vision, we can see a future where children eat real food every day.

While I support all of the bills in Speaker Johnson's Growing Food Equity plan, my testimony will focus on Int. 1676, requiring the DOE to come up with a scratch cooking implementation plan.

This bill is critical to prioritizing the health of our children, who are in crisis. Within [New York City](#), 1 in 5 kindergarten students, and 1 in 4 Head Start children, is obese. Children as young as 8 years old are on [cholesterol-lowering](#) and [blood pressure-lowering](#) medication. [Fifty percent of children under 15 have fatty streaks](#) in their arteries, the beginning stages of heart disease.

In addition, a study published in the [American Journal of Public Health](#) found evidence of a significant relationship between unhealthy dietary patterns and poorer mental health in children and adolescents.

But this final statistic is the one that hit me hardest. According to a 2005 study by the [New England Journal of Medicine](#), [this](#) is the first generation of children that may not outlive their parents because of the prevalence and severity of obesity is so great.

So what does school food have to do with all of this? It turns out, quite a lot.

Children spend over 6 hours a day in school on average and [consume up to one half of their daily calories](#) at school.

And in NYC, the Office of Food and Nutrition Services feeds 1.1 children a day.

In my mind, when a government organization is responsible for feeding nearly 1 million children half their calories every day, there is a responsibility, [if not a legal duty](#), to ensure that its meals are not feeding our health crisis.

And yet that is exactly what our city is doing.

NYC is feeding our kids highly-processed bag-to-oven foods—mozzarella sticks, chicken nuggets, burgers, turkey roll ups, meat patties, Tostitos-branded beef filled taco bowls, and pizza — highly-processed fast food built by a big food system which does not care about the health of our kids, but only cares about the profits that they can make. And to wash it all down, chocolate milk sweetened with 8 grams of added sugars.

The dangers of highly-processed foods have been highlighted in a slew of [recent research](#) showing a direct correlation between processed food and chronic illnesses, including cancer and cardiovascular disease.

It's also worth noting that when [highly-processed foods are introduced at a young age](#), we set kids up for a lifetime of diet-related disease.

And while this issue seems to be mostly about food, it's actually about **EQUITY**, a word that our Chancellor likes to use a lot and to his credit has been working hard to expand in our middle school application processes and hopefully in our high school admissions processes as well.

Make no mistake. School food is about equity because obesity doesn't strike everyone at the same rate. People of some racial and ethnic minorities, especially individuals with low socioeconomic status, [are at disproportionately greater risk for dietary-diseases](#). Childhood obesity disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color. In New York City, children living in the Bronx have the highest prevalence of overweight (43% vs. 4% in Brooklyn, 40% in Staten Island, 39% in Queens, 38% in Manhattan).

According to the [Youth Risk Behavior Survey by the CDC](#), compared to New York City students, a higher proportion of East and Central Harlem students are overweight and obese. 35% of East and Central Harlem students in grades 9-12 are overweight and obese compared to 28% in NYC. Obesity rates in low income East Harlem are higher than what they are on the wealthier Upper East Side, just a few short blocks away.

This also plays out in the lunchroom. Two thirds of kids eating school meals don't have the option of bringing lunch from home, they have to eat the processed food served at school lunch.

And when you take a closer look you see even more and more inequity in our school food system.

- Why do some schools serve the "alternative menu" which contains two homemade meals a week, while others serve the fast food menu?
- Why do some schools serve chocolate sweetened milk, which contains 8 grams of added sugar per container, nearly one third of the sugar allowances recommended by the [World Health Organization](#) and [American Heart Association](#), while others don't?
- Why do some schools have gardens or grow towers where children can learn to grow their food and develop a relationship with the earth and others do not?
- Why do some schools offer their kids robust hands-on nutrition and food education where kids learn the importance of reading labels and making healthy food choices?
- And how can any of our school children eat their lunches when they only have 6-8 minutes to do so?

Why are we not prioritizing the health of our kids?

Why are we setting them up for a lifelong struggle with diet and disease instead of giving them the best food toolkit for success?

We can no longer sit back while another generation of kids gets sick. In order to improve the health of our children and fight this crisis we need to move away from highly-processed foods. To get to scratch-cooking in a system this large we need a plan. This is the bill that will revolutionize the way we feed our children in NYC.

Infrastructure

We need to understand how many kitchens must be renovated to ensure proper kitchen facilities exist. Is it more cost effective to renovate kitchens, to use a hub and spoke model to ferry food to local schools, or to create a series of borough-centered commissary style kitchens where food can be made in a central location and shipped out to local schools? We need this bill to evaluate what makes the most financial and logistical sense.

Culinary Training

To serve delicious scratch-cooked foods that our children will want to eat, we need culinary training. We can't simply expect food service workers to be able to cook food from scratch when all they are trained to do is open a bag of mozzarella sticks or chicken poppers and heat them to a safe temperature. We need a detailed outline of culinary staff training and development, and that training needs to happen at regular intervals throughout the year as menus change and evolve.

Cost

We need to understand what this will cost; this bill will require that DOE come up with a budget that summarizes the additional costs including infrastructure, labor, food, and training, to implement this program.

Timeline

The bill would also require the DOE to provide detailed road map of the scratch-cooking programs roll-out with interim target dates so that scratch-cooking is achieved across all public schools within five years of submission of this plan.

When I started doing this work, quite frankly, people thought I was nuts. They said, you can't change school food— it's too big it's too entrenched. But we can. What it requires is strategy and vision, both of which are codified by this bill. Make no mistake. Together we can and with this bill, we will.

My proposed edits to the bill can be found [here](#).

Thank you.

Andrea Strong

Founder, NYC Healthy School Food Alliance

TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

**New York City Council
Committee on Economic Development
Committee on General Welfare
Committee on Education
Local Laws and Resolutions re: Food Insecurity**

Submitted by:

Ariel Savransky

UJA-Federation of New York

September 20, 2019

Thank you Chairperson Vallone, Chairperson Levin and Chairperson Treyger and members of the Committees on Economic Development, General Welfare and Education for the opportunity to provide testimony on Local Laws and Resolutions related to the food security in New York City. My name is Ariel Savransky and I am an Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA-Federation of New York. Established more than 100 years ago, UJA-Federation of New York is one of the nation's largest local philanthropies. Central to our mission is to care for those in need. We identify and meet the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. We connect people to their communities and respond to crises both locally and around the world. We support nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services. On behalf of UJA, our network of nonprofit partners and those we serve, thank you for proposing thoughtful legislation to strategically reduce rates of food insecurity throughout the city as well as thinking about ways to connect New Yorkers to healthy, locally produced food.

The rates of poverty, food insecurity and hunger remain staggeringly high in New York City. According to the most recent U.S. Census data, the overall poverty rate in New York City is 18 percent and about 1.2 million people live in food insecure households, with one in five relying on food pantries and soup kitchens. Furthermore, discussion on the Federal level about changing SNAP eligibility criteria will further tax already limited resources and result in the inability of our agencies to respond to the increased nutritional needs of the individuals with which they work.

It is essential that the City continues to make the fight against poverty, food insecurity and hunger a top priority. We submit the following comments on the proposed Local Laws and Resolutions:

1) Food insecurity on college campuses

Food insecurity among college students is a growing concern with several recent studies suggesting that both two-year and four-year college students are more likely to be food insecure than the general U.S. population. Prevalence of food insecurity on college campuses ranges from 14 percent to 56 percent.¹ According to the Healthy CUNY study, about 15 percent of students throughout CUNY campuses report they had gone hungry sometimes or often in the past year because they lacked resources to buy food and almost a quarter reported that they had to skip a meal because they could not afford food.² Based on this survey, about 60,000 CUNY students experienced food insecurity.

¹ Dubick J, Mathews B, Cady CL. *Hunger on Campus: The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students*. College and University Food Bank Alliance, 2016.

² CUNY SPH Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy. *Healthy CUNY: Promoting Health for Academic Success: An Assessment of Challenges and Opportunities at City University of New York*. February 2018. http://sph.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Promoting-Health-for-Academic-Success.2.12.18_-FINALpdf-2.13.18.pdf

UJA-Federation also conducted a survey of CUNY students, specifically those affiliated with campus Hillels. Out of the over 600 students who responded to the survey, only 56 percent reported having consistent, dependable access to food. This is especially concerning because food insecurity is associated with lower academic success.

We are very supportive of Resolution Number 1024, calling upon the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to expand eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. According to SNAP guidelines, an individual who is enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education is not eligible to participate in SNAP unless the individual qualifies for a specified exemption including: receiving TANF or disability payments; have paid employment of 20 hours per week or more; get Federal or State-funded work study payments; or be enrolled in an education and training program that is operated by the state or local government.³ In 2010, Massachusetts defined this last provision to include most community colleges and state colleges since they provide education and training as defined by USDA rules.⁴ Pennsylvania and New Jersey have also redefined this last provision. New York State could potentially do the same and define most income-eligible students at community colleges, CUNY and SUNY as eligible for SNAP due to being enrolled in an education and training program as defined by USDA rules. This could be an important step towards alleviating food insecurity on college campuses.

2) Food insecurity among seniors

UJA-Federation supports the creation of programs to increase access to food for those who are food insecure. Between 2015-17, an estimated 183,290 seniors lived in food insecure households in New York City, representing 10.9% of the population.⁵ Yet SNAP is under-utilized by this population and nationwide, senior citizens have a lower sign-up rate for SNAP benefits than any other age group. There are several reasons why seniors do not apply for SNAP. Among those are that many eligible seniors are not aware that they are eligible; some are too embarrassed to apply, and others think that if they receive SNAP, they will take food benefits away from others, especially children. Additionally, the application process may be perceived as difficult and burdensome.

Working with the State to simplify access to SNAP for older or disabled adults will help ensure that individuals and families are aware of and have the tools necessary to enroll in these critical programs. We thank the City Council for advocating for the federal government to approve New York State's application to create an Elderly Simplified Application Process (ESAP), currently operating in nine states. Under ESAP, older citizens can be granted several waivers, including an extension of the certification period to 24 months from the current 6- or 12-month time frame; waiving the full interview for recertification; and generally waiving the requirement to verify

³ Government Publishing Office. *CFR 2009 Title 7*. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2009-title7-vol4/pdf/CFR-2009-title7-vol4-sec273-5.pdf>

⁴ Mass Legal Services. Food Stamps/SNAP benefits now available for more community college students. June 2010. <https://www.masslegalservices.org/content/food-stamps-snap-benefits-now-available-more-community-college-students>

⁵ Hunger Free America. *The Uneaten Big Apple: Hunger's High Cost in NYC*. 2018. https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/NYC%20and%20NYS%20Hunger%20Report%202018_0.pdf

unearned income, household size, residency, and shelter expenses. By streamlining the SNAP application process, it will be easier for eligible low-income seniors to apply for SNAP, thereby increasing their participation in the program.

Furthermore, since 2015, the Human Resources Administration (HRA) accepted SNAP applications through its website. There, applicants can pre-screen for eligibility, submit their applications and supporting documents, and manage their benefits. They have also developed a mobile app. These developments should help overcome some of the barriers that seniors may face in enrollment and recertification if they have internet access. According to HRA, about 76 percent of SNAP applications and 42 percent of submitted recertifications are done online.

However, as barriers remain, we support Local Law 1659 that proposes requiring an annual report in relation to a plan to identify and enroll seniors eligible for SNAP benefits. We also support Resolution 1025 calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to opt into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Restaurant Meals Program to allow disabled, elderly and homeless SNAP recipients to use their benefits on hot meals and other prepared foods at participating grocery stores, delis and restaurants.

In thinking about ways to support seniors and ensure they have access to healthy, culturally appropriate meals, we propose the following recommendations:

A. Ensure that community-based organizations (CBOs) are equipped with information regarding senior SNAP eligibility and enrollment procedure

- a. CBOs play an important role in providing services to their communities and many provide wraparound supports. These organizations are crucial partners in informing their clients about benefits eligibility as well as aiding in benefits enrollment. We encourage the Council and the Administration to work with CBOs to further understand the barriers seniors may be facing as well as to engage with this population to overcome any obstacles.

B. Ensure New Yorkers are aware of the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot launched in April

- a. This year, the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service launched a SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot which allows SNAP recipients to use their benefits to purchase food online on Amazon, ShopRite and Walmart's websites. This option is especially helpful for both those living in neighborhoods with limited access to fresh, healthy food as well as for homebound seniors served by many of our partner nonprofits. **We urge the City to invest in efforts to publicize this program so that SNAP recipients are aware of this option. We also urge the City to think about ways to remove barriers to participation in this program, such as the delivery fees or expense of food available through the participating vendors.**

C. Home Delivered and Congregate Meals for Seniors

- a. UJA thanks the Council for working with the Administration to increase baselined funding for Senior Center Meals by \$10 million in FY 20, an investment which will grow to \$15 million in 2021. With nearly 30,000 individuals visiting senior centers daily, these sites play an important role in connecting older adults to

services and community supports. However, for homebound seniors, investment is still needed to appropriately fund home delivered meals, which are currently reimbursed below the national average rate. More funding is needed to increase raw food/disposable reimbursement rates, account for culturally appropriate meals, and increase funds for enhanced staffing costs. **Although the additional funding in the FY20 budget will help to fill some gaps for senior center meals, we urge the Council to continue to work with the Administration to ensure that seniors have adequate access to quality home delivered meals.**

3) The Good Food Purchasing Program

Local Law 1660, sponsored by Council Member Cohen, seeks to create a good food purchasing program. While we appreciate the intent of this bill, we would like to express the importance of ensuring that, if passed, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee do not create additional procurement difficulties for the community-based organizations engaging in food delivery services for the city. For example, currently, it is no simple task to create a menu at a senior center that meets the nutritional requirements, is within the often meager budget, and is approved by the contract holding agency. It is critical that this often complex and time-consuming process not become more intricate due to new, well-intentioned but potentially cumbersome procurement requirements that may be result from this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed Local Laws and Resolutions to fight food insecurity in the city. Please contact Ariel Savransky at savranskya@ujafedny.org or 212-836-1360 with any questions.

Testimony of Charles Platkin, Ph.D., J.D., M.P.H., Distinguished Lecturer, Hunter College, CUNY; Executive Director, Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center

Title of hearing: Int. No. 1676

September 18 , 2019

Written Testimony

Thank you Council Member Rosenthal and the members of the Committee on Education for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding the Scratch-Cooking Implementation Bill.

I am providing this testimony on behalf of the [Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center](#), of which I am the executive director. The Center was created in 2012 to develop collaborative, innovative and evidence-based solutions to prevent diet-related diseases, promote healthy eating and reduce food insecurity in New York City and other urban centers. We work with policy makers, community organizations, advocates and the public to create healthier, more sustainable food environments.

The health of New York City children today is being compromised by increasing health risks of obesity and other diet-related diseases. Currently, nearly 40 percent of NYC public school students in grades K-8 are overweight or obese.¹

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene says the rate of obesity among Black students is approximately 65 percent greater than among White students. Among Latino students, the rate is 97 percent greater than among white students.² Individuals, especially children, who are overweight are at increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis, and cancer.³ Additionally, according to research reported in Obesity Reviews, obese children and adolescents were approximately “five times more likely to be obese in adulthood than those who were not obese.”⁴

But it is not only health costs that matter; diet-related diseases and poor nutrition may also adversely affect academic performance of our youth. Numerous studies have demonstrated the

¹ Health Department Announces Pediatric Obesity Outreach Campaign Targeting Pediatricians and Family Practitioners. NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. 2019.

https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/press/pr2019/pediatric-obesity-outreach-campaign_page

² Health Department Announces Pediatric Obesity Outreach Campaign Targeting Pediatricians and Family Practitioners. NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. 2019.

https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/press/pr2019/pediatric-obesity-outreach-campaign_page

³ The Health Effects of Overweight and Obesity. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015.

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/effects/index.html>

⁴ Simmonds M, Llewellyn A, Owen CG, Woolacott N. (2016). Predicting adult obesity from childhood obesity: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Obesity Reviews. (2):95-107

impacts between nutrition and students' thinking skills, behavior, and health.^{5,6,7}

[The Office of Food & Nutrition Services](#) in the New York City Department of Education is faced with the arduous and noble task of feeding up to [1.1 million children](#), which accounts for nearly 60 percent of the food school children eat each day. While school food has been an integral part of the public school experience for decades, the quality and care of its ingredients and preparation has gone through its own evolution.

In 1946, the [National School Lunch Act](#) was signed into law.⁸ Originally envisioned as an agricultural subsidy program that expanded access to nutritious meals for undernourished children, the program underwent major budget cuts in the 1980s during the Reagan administration.⁹ With a \$1.5 billion budget cut, there was an overall shift in the nutritional quality of meals served -- a time when ketchup was considered a vegetable in schools.^{10,11}

While school food is often criticized, meals served in New York City public schools deserve acknowledgment for major milestones such as [Breakfast in the Classroom](#), [Meatless Mondays](#), [New York Thursdays](#) and the possibility of [eliminating chocolate milk in school cafeterias](#). New York City schools now have a list of prohibited ingredients that includes sweeteners such as high fructose corn syrup, preservatives such as ammonium hydroxide, and flavor-enhancers such as MSG.

Additionally, New York City has long been a leader in promoting healthy eating among its residents and has launched many initiatives aimed at improving the health of our young people in particular. These include [Eat Well, Play Hard](#), which provides nutrition and physical activity classes in child-care centers; [Farm to Preschool](#), which brings fresh, local produce and nutrition education to city preschools; and the [Summer Meals Program](#), which provides free breakfast and lunch to children ages 18 and under at public schools, parks, pools and libraries. Passing the Scratch-Cooking Implementation Bill will be another important step toward ensuring that children have healthy food options while eating outside their home.

The introduction and implementation of scratch cooking at all New York City schools would show a significant commitment and investment in our children. Adopting scratch cooking in schools means students will be served whole, nutrient-rich foods. The benefits of doing this include not only instilling healthy eating habits for healthier minds and bodies but also

⁵ Nutrition and Students' Academic Performance. Wilder Research, 2014. https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/Cargill_lit_review_1-14.pdf

⁶ Taras, Howard. Nutrition and School Performance at School, 2009. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2005.tb06674.x>

⁷ Florence, Michelle D. et al. Diet Quality and Academic Performance, 2019. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2008.00288.x>

⁸ National School Lunch Act. United States Department of Agriculture, 2018. https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/history_5

⁹ Rude, Emelyn. *An Abbreviated History of School Lunch in America*, TIME, 2016. <https://time.com/4496771/school-lunch-history/>

¹⁰ Nestle, Marion. *Is Ketchup a Vegetable Again?*, 2011 <https://www.foodpolitics.com/2011/11/ketchup-is-a-vegetable-again/>

¹¹ Thornton, Mary and Martin Schram. *U.S. Holds The Ketchup In Schools*, Washington Post, 1981. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/09/26/us-holds-the-ketchup-in-schools/9ffd029a-17f5-4e8c-ab91-1348a44773ee/>

supporting local procurement, reducing packaging/waste and providing learning opportunities to staff and students.^{12,13}

With almost one million children eating school lunch every day, scratch cooking is an important step we can take to ensure that today's youth learn the benefits of eating real, healthy food made from whole ingredients. Scratch cooking will improve food-related outcomes in NYC Schools.

In fact, a two-year pilot study in Boston called the Chef Initiative explored the impact cafeterias can have in providing healthy meals. Professionally trained chefs prepared wholesome, nutritious meals from scratch in school cafeterias for students over a two year period. Students at Chef Initiative schools who were exposed to scratch cooking consumed more whole-grains and vegetables than before the program was implemented.¹⁴

Additional studies have yielded similar results, demonstrating that increasing the proportion of scratch cooked foods can lead to an increase in fruit, vegetable and whole-grain consumption, a decrease in the consumption of fat, saturated fat, sodium and calories, and contribute to healthier school food environments.¹⁵

A study published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* aimed to determine whether school lunch entrées made in a district from raw United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods, the largest source of ingredients for school meals, can be healthier and less expensive to prepare than purchasing processed foods.¹⁶ The study found that scratch-cooking had significantly lower food costs, higher labor costs, and did not have different total costs compared with entrées that were processed. The findings suggest that scratch-cooking can be a cost-effective way to expand the variety of healthy school lunches prepared with USDA Foods.

Furthermore, according to a report from the [Pew Charitable Trusts](#), school food directors report steady or increased participation in school lunch programs and stable or rising revenue after implementing more scratch cooking.¹⁷

¹² Foods in America's Schools. Chef Ann Foundation, 2016.

http://www.chefannfoundation.org/assets/uploads/documents/CAE_School_Food_Infographic_Oct2016.pdf

¹³ Schober, D., Carpenter, L., Currie, V., Yarock, A.L. (2016). Evaluation of the LiveWell@School Food Initiative Shows Increases in Scratch Cooking and Improvement in Nutritional Content. *J Sch Health*.86(8):604-11

¹⁴ Cohen & Smit. (2012). Long-Term Impact of a Chef on School Lunch Consumption: Findings from a 2-Year Pilot Study in Boston Middle Schools. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. 112(6). 927-933

¹⁵ Behrens, T., Liebert, M. Peterson, H, Smith, H, Sutcliffe, J, Day, A., Mack, J. (2018). Changes in School Food Preparation Methods Result in Healthier Cafeteria Lunches in Elementary Schools. *Am J Prev Med*. 54(5 Suppl 2):S139-S144

¹⁶ [https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672\(14\)00498-5/fulltext](https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672(14)00498-5/fulltext)

¹⁷ Serving Healthy School Meals. The Pew Charitable Trust, 2013.

https://schoolnutrition.org/uploadedFiles/Resources_and_Research/Research/KITSEquipmentReport.pdf

Food Insecurity and Scratch Cooking

[Eighteen percent of NYC children](#) suffer from hunger and/or food insecurity.¹⁸ Hunger and poor nutrition adversely impact academic performance,^{17,19,20} behavior and attention,²¹ timeliness, attendance,^{27,29} and student retention.²²

A way to improve food security among New York City school students is to increase consumption and destigmatize participation in consuming school foods. Using scratch cooking in school cafeterias is a significant method of improving consumption amongst those who need it most. Research has shown that students also want improvements and healthier school foods such as scratch cooking.²³

While acknowledging the benefits of scratch-cooking, it is equally important to recognize the barriers and challenges. Such challenges include the cost implications of enacting a scratch-cooking policy, ensuring food safety standards of onsite cooking procedures (i.e handling raw meat vs. frozen beef patties), building the skills and knowledge of kitchen staff, and upgrading kitchen facilities to ensure they have the capacity and equipment to implement scratch cooking practices.²⁴ However, the proposed bill will carefully evaluate the existing challenges unique to New York City and make appropriate recommendations for overcoming them, just as other cities have done.

Schools have been identified as offering a critical opportunity to improve healthy eating behaviors. For the last ten years there has been a federal interest in providing freshly prepared school meals. In 2010, the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act](#) required cafeterias to offer more fruit, vegetables, and whole grains in every school meal.²⁵ However, as the current administration rolls back important nutrition standards for grains, flavored milks and sodium that were part of the Act, New York City must continue to lead despite changes at the federal level.²⁶

¹⁸ Hunger Free America. 2018. The Uneaten Big Apple: Hunger's High Cost in New York City.

https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/NYC%20and%20NYS%20Hunger%20Report%202018_0.pdf. Accessed Sept. 20, 2019.

¹⁹ Murphy JM, Wehler CA, Pagano ME, Little M, Kleinman RE & Jellinek MS (1998) Relationship between hunger and psychosocial functioning in low-income American children. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 37, 163–170.

²⁰ Cady C.L. Food insecurity as a student issue. *J. Coll. Character*. 2014;15:265–272.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1515/jcc-2014-0031> Accessed Feb. 6, 2019

²¹ Alaimo K, Olson CM & Frongillo EA Jr (2001) Food insufficiency and American school-aged children's cognitive, academic, and psychosocial development. *Pediatrics* 108, 44–53.

²² Payne-Sturges, D.C., et al. (2018) Student Hunger on Campus: Food Insecurity Among College Students and Implications for Academic Institutions. *American Journal of Health Promotion* 2018, Vol. 32(2) 349-354. DOI: 10.1177/0890117117719620

²³ Asada, Y., Hughes, A., Read, M., Schwartz, M. & Chriqui, J. 2017. High School Students' Recommendations to Improve School Food Environments: Insights From a Critical Stakeholder Group. *J Sch Health*. Nov;87(11):842-849. doi: 10.1111/josh.12562.

²⁴ Serving Healthy School Meals in California: The tools needed to do the job. Pew Charitable Trust, 2014.

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/Assets/2014/11/KITSCaliforniaReport11214Final.pdf>

²⁵ Arnold, Alexa. *Six Things You Need to Know About School Food*, 2018.

<https://foodcorps.org/6-things-you-need-to-know-about-school-food/>

²⁶ Responding to the Needs of Local Schools, USDA Publishes School Meals Final Rule. United States Department of Agriculture, 2018.

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2018/12/06/responding-needs-local-schools-usda-publishes-school-meals-final>

Additional Facts and Data

- The New York City Department of Education is the largest public school system in the United States, serving about 1.1 million students in more than 1,700 schools. [The Office of Food & Nutrition Services](#) serves approximately 940,000 meals to these students each school day. All meals are provided at no charge to the students or their parents. When a government organization is responsible for feeding almost a million children a day, there is a responsibility to ensure that those meals prepare our youth for success.²⁷
- Good nutrition options can have a positive impact on NYC children, helping them to maintain a healthy weight and BMI, increasing their fruit and vegetable consumption, encouraging them to develop a positive attitude toward those foods, and improving academic performance.²⁸
- Research has documented that habits formed during the early years last a lifetime -- making the need to improve students' nutrition and help them establish healthy eating behaviors all the more crucial.^{29,30,31}
- Academic performance increases in children who eat a healthy foodies. Lack of adequate consumption of specific foods, such as fruits, vegetables, or dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.³²

For these reasons, the Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center fully supports efforts to improve the quality of the food served to our children in schools across New York City as outlined in the Scratch-Cooking Implementation Bill.

We at the Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center stand ready to help in any way we can to improve the health of children across New York City. The Center and the City University of New York recognize that childhood obesity is a serious and concerning issue throughout New York City that can have damaging effects on the city down the road, particularly an increased strain on our healthcare system and rising healthcare costs. However, we also recognize that

²⁷ Office of Food and Nutrition Services. NYC Department of Education. <http://www.schoolfoodnyc.org/aboutus/aboutus.htm>

²⁸ Piekarz-Porter E, Schermbeck RM, Leider J, Young SK, Chriqui JF. Working on Wellness: How Aligned are District Wellness Policies with the Soon-To-Be Implemented Federal Wellness Policy Requirements? Chicago, IL: National Wellness Policy Study, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2017, www.go.uic.edu/NWPSproducts.

²⁹ Abraham S, Noriega Brooke R, Shin JY. College students eating habits and knowledge of nutritional requirements. *J Nutr Hum Health*. 2018;2(1):13-17

³⁰ Troxel, N. Hastings, P. (2014). Poverty during Childhood and Adolescence May Predict Long-term Health. Center for Poverty Research. UC Davis. https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/policy_brief_troxel-hastings_poverty_stress.pdf Accessed Feb. 5, 2019.

³¹ Conger RD, Conger KJ, Martin MJ. Socioeconomic Status, Family Processes, and Individual Development. *J Marriage Fam*. 2010;72(3):685-704. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00725.x.

³² Health and Academic Achievement, Center for Disease Control. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf

scratch cooking and more nutritious school food can be part of the solution. We are eager to work towards making healthier options available for children.



Ribka Getachew

Title: Director of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Policy Campaign

Organization: Community Food Advocates

Testimony before the New York City Council in Support of the Adoption and Implementation of the Good Food Purchasing Program in the City of New York

Introduction #1660: In relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program

Joint Hearing held by the NYC Council Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Education and the Committee on General Welfare

September 18, 2019

Hello all, and good afternoon. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Chair of the Committee on Economic Development, Paul Vallone, the bill sponsor of Introduction #1660, Andrew Cohen, and all members of the committee for providing an opportunity to testify on this very important matter.

My name is Ribka Getachew and I am the Director of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Policy Campaign at Community Food Advocates. Working in close partnership with the Food Chain Workers Alliance, CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, and the Center for Good Food Purchasing, we have been



building a robust coalition of local and national food system experts that align with the 5 value areas that serve as the pillars of the Good Food Purchasing Program: Local Economies, Valued

Workforce, Animal Welfare, Nutrition, and Environmental Sustainability. Many of these phenomenal experts are in this room today to lend their support to this bill.

The Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) is, at its core, a metrics-based, flexible framework that is transforming the way public institutions across the country purchase food to create a more equitable and transparent food system. To date, the Program is currently being implemented in over 15 different cities and jurisdictions and are on their way to shifting over \$1 billion in public food dollars to food vendors that uphold the values of the Good Food Purchasing Program.

Our City serves approximately 240 million meals/year across its public food-serving agencies. These agencies serve some of our most vulnerable and food insecure populations, including but not limited to, senior citizens, students, the homeless, incarcerated individuals, and those under medical care. While instrumental, the impact of the Good Food Purchasing Program in NYC goes beyond that of the consumer, however. Our current food system, the largest employment sector in the United States (with over 21.5 million workers), is plagued with myriad inequities. It is one that benefits from the history and modern-day manifestations of perverse, systemic racism and oppression; where mega-agribusiness reign supreme and the small and mid-sized family and cooperatively owned farms and food operations have little, if any, shot in the institutional marketplace; which depletes our earth's resources, and compromises the health and safety of and prospects of a living wage for all workers throughout the food supply chain; inhumanely treats animals and over relies on the sourcing of animal products; and that does a poor job of uplifting and sustaining the health and wellbeing of communities.

Considering our tremendous purchasing power (in 2018 alone, NYC spent on its top 22 *vendors*, close to \$62 million in food contracts, excluding DOE contracts and approximately \$820 million in food contracts, including the DOE): New York City is especially primed and uniquely

positioned to becoming the next leader in the country, taking a firm stance in declaring that good food relies on a *values-driven food system*: one that is ecologically and economically viable, sustainable, truly racially just and socially responsible, humane, safe, and teeming with nutritious and culturally relevant foods.

This is the vision of our local, regional, national, and global food system that we are referring to when we advocate for this legislation. We can set a major precedent in this country with the codification of Intro. 1660.

In short: We must act NOW.

While a number of City agencies have already undergone the Good Food Purchasing Program baseline reporting and action planning, we recognize that adopting and codifying the Good Food Purchasing Policy is instrumental to the longevity, continued commitment to and participation in the GFPP on the part of our City and our Cities' food serving agencies, no matter a change in leadership. The NYC Good Food Purchasing Coalition has been leveraging our expertise to continue working with the City Council, most recently in the form of the suggested bill modifications that we are submitting alongside our testimony. We look forward to continuing to work with the City Council to ensure that we codify the strongest and most substantive policy and with the agencies to support them as they move through successfully implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program. We thank CM Andrew Cohen & Speaker Corey Johnson for their leadership on Introduction #1660.

MEMO

Date: 09/18/2019

To: The New York City Council

From: Edwina Luc

Re: Res. 1024-2019

I am here to support resolution 1024. I wish to advocate for its modification to expand its eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to all low-income college students regardless of the college they are attending.

I understand that immigrants and low-income students often attend public colleges. However, we ought not forget that some of these students attend private colleges as well and they also face food insecurity.

I graduated from Brooklyn College in 2012, as a student there I experienced food insecurity. In 2016, I turned down my acceptance to the Global Public Health program at NYU because I knew I could not afford tuition, housing expenses, and food, thus I knew I will not be able to complete the program, thank goodness to CUNY, I was able to complete my bachelor and now I am pursuing a Master in Public Health (MPH).

I strongly believe that access to food should be given to all low-income college students in New York City.

Thank you,

Edwina Luc, CHES, MPH candidate
luc.edwina@gmail.com



Children's Aid

Every step of the way

Testimony Submitted for the Record

**Whitney Reuling, Director of Food and Nutrition Programs, Children's Aid
Before The New York City Council Committee on Economic Development,
Committee on Education and Committee on General Welfare**

Joint Meeting on Growing Food Equity Bills September 18, 2019

My name is Whitney Reuling and I am the Director of Food and Nutrition Programs at Children's Aid. Thank you to Chairpersons Paul Vallone, Mark Treyger and Steven T. Levin as well as the members of the City Council Committees on Economic Development, Education and General Welfare for the opportunity to provide feedback on the legislation to advance food equity in New York City.

For over 165 years, Children's Aid has been committed to ensuring that there are no boundaries to the aspirations of young people, and no limits to their potential. We are leading a comprehensive counterattack on the obstacles that threaten kids' achievements in school and in life. We have also constructed a continuum of services, positioned every step of the way throughout childhood that builds well-being and prepares young people to succeed at every level of education and every milestone of life. Today our over 2,000 full and part time staff members empower nearly 50,000 children, youth and their families through our network of 40 locations including early childhood education centers, public schools, community centers and community health clinics in four New York City neighborhoods – Harlem, Washington Heights, the South Bronx and the north shore of Staten Island.

In an effort to better serve our communities, Children's Aid launched Go!Healthy in 2003 as its obesity and health promotion initiative. Through five unique programs, Go!Healthy provides education, fresh food access, and resources about nutrition, wellness, and the benefits of healthy cooking and eating to children and families across 29 sites. **We serve over 11,000 clients and 570,277 meals through this initiative each year.**

Over 1.7 million New Yorkers lack access to healthy food options. This is not just a food issue, it is a complex economic and social problem that reflects issues of structural racism and inequality. Research shows that accessing and affording nutritious food is especially challenging for those living in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color. These disparities in physical and financial access to healthy food are systemic problems

caused and exacerbated by public policy. To solve these problems, we need policy solutions that advance food equity like the bills being considered.

We also want to call attention to the fact that Congress is currently undertaking efforts to reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act (CNR), which govern the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infant and Children (WIC), and other federal programs that provide food to children and their families. With the largest school district in the nation and a large constituency of WIC and CACFP participants, New York City can be a very influential voice for positive change within the Child Nutrition Reauthorization. A strong CNR will ensure our children are healthy and ready to learn and will generate local economic opportunities that strengthen our communities. It would also provide an opportunity for federal funding for some of the priorities put forward in the bills in front of these Committees today, including scratch cooking in schools and summer meal programs. As a member of the NYC4CNR coalition, we urge the Speaker Corey Johnson and members of the New York City Council to join us in advocating for a strong Child Nutrition Act.

Overall, we support the passage of the bills being considered (Int.1650, Int. 1654, Int. 1660, Int. 1676, Int. 1664, Int. 1666, and Int. 1663). However, we urge the City Council to consider the amendments included in the recommendations below.

Int. 1650: In relation to the provision of information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets.

Health bucks is a critical nutrition program for both individuals struggling to afford healthy food as well as local farmers who depend on the program as an important source of income. For Children's Aid, health bucks are a vital component in Children's Aid Go!Healthy programming. In FY19, we distributed over \$3,000 in health bucks to support the purchasing of fresh produce across our five Food Box sites and at local farmers markets. The Go!Healthy Food Box program provides access to affordable, high-quality produce for Children's Aid communities in Harlem, the South Bronx, and Staten Island. Individuals can purchase a pre-packed bag of locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables costing only \$10, yet containing nearly \$25-\$30 worth of farmers' market-quality produce. In addition to health bucks, participants can use EBT and WIC FMNP coupons to further reduce the price. Last year, Children's Aid distributed over 4,000 bags and health bucks were used in nearly 20% of sales.

While health bucks are widely used within Children's Aid programs, more can be done to support farmers' market operators' efforts to promote health bucks and increase awareness about how and where it can be used by SNAP participants, especially in immigrant and non-English speaking communities.

RECOMMENDATION: We support the passage of Int.1650 with the following amendment:

- Add legislative language that requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) to translate information regarding the health bucks program and farmers markets into each of the designated city languages both in paper and electronically.

Int. 1654: In relation to neighborhood awareness campaigns regarding farm-to-city projects.

The “Farm-to-City” website created by Speaker Johnson’s office is a valuable centralized resource about the many programs being offered by community-based organizations around the city connecting low income individuals with sources of fresh, locally grown healthy food. We believe a public awareness campaign in the five city languages to promote this resource could help more New Yorkers in need with these vital programs. Children’s Aid serves many Spanish speaking families and recognizes the importance and impact of connecting with communities in their native language. Our Go!Healthy program materials, including flyers and recipes are provided in both Spanish and English. In addition, Go!Healthy nutritionists are bilingual and community nutrition workshops are delivered in both Spanish and English.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We support the passage of Int. 1654 with the following amendments:

- Add School Gardens, Urban Farms and Community Gardens in the definition of “farm-to-city projects” outlined in the bill. It is useful for community members to know about the existence and location of these programs and it can even inform parents’ decision-making when choosing a school for their child. Many community members are currently unaware of urban farms or gardens within their own neighborhoods. This resource would increase accessibility and connect more New Yorkers to community gardens and green spaces.
- Link or combine the existing GreenThumb Garden Map housed on the GreenThumb website and the NYC Urban Agriculture portal created by the Department of City Planning, NYC Parks, and the Department of Small Business Services developed as a result of Int. 1661 with the Farm-to-City Food map housed on the City Council website to create one centralized hub for farm-to-city projects to be promoted through public awareness campaigns.
- Add language to ensure that DOHMH consults with the community based organizations managing and running projects included in the awareness campaign to discuss messaging and strategies to promote the campaign in neighborhoods and community districts.
- Allocate funding to maintain updated materials regarding farm-to-city projects given that some of these projects’ operating hours change seasonally and there is significant turn-over within these organizations.

Int. 1663: In relation to establishing an office of urban agriculture and an urban agriculture advisory board.

Urban agriculture has a significant role to play in improving access to healthy food, health outcomes, food literacy, workforce development and food sovereignty in low income communities across New York. Int. 1663 is an important step forward in respecting and supporting the gardeners, farmers and organizations that have been leading this work in New York City for decades. Children's Aid supports gardens and implements accompanying nutrition education programming in many of our community schools and community centers. These gardens help to transform our community schools and centers into vibrant environments that teach children about agriculture and help cultivate interest in healthy eating. In addition, Children's Aid provides urban farming job training opportunities through Summer Youth Employment (SYEP) in which young people learn gardening and farming skills by maintaining school gardens and growing food in New York City Housing Authority. Last summer, over 200 Children's Aid SYEP youth participated in food and farming related summer job placements.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We urge the City Council to pass Int.1663 with the amendments below:

- Ensure that the Urban Agriculture Advisory Board created by this bill works directly with the new Director of the Office of Urban Agriculture to co-create the Urban Agriculture Plan.
- In section 3, add education to the list of purposes.
- In section 5, add The New York City Department of Education and Grow to Learn as offices to consult.
- In section d, related to the creation of an urban agriculture advisory board, add that it would include a member that works on school gardens.

Ensuring NYC's Urban Agriculture Plan is Equitable and Inclusive

Children's Aid believes the people most impacted by an issue are the best suited to address it and should be meaningfully engaged in the policy making process. Community and nonprofit leaders, diverse families (including families of color, non-English speakers and immigrants), advocates and others should be engaged to ensure that the city's Urban Agriculture plan effectively meets the unique needs of the community. This responsibility should not be taken lightly, and requires intentional commitment and explicit work on a regular and ongoing basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We urge the City Council to incorporate the following four elements into local law 1663 to ensure accountability and equity in the development and implementation of the plan:

1. **Host and promote community engagement opportunities at all stages of the urban agriculture advisory board's planning and plan development process** — beginning with understanding the community's expectations for the plan. We recommend that the Office of Urban Agriculture be required to identify and

document how community stakeholders had been consulted as part of the development of the plan. Potential strategies to engage community voice in the city's urban agriculture plan include the following:

- Large-scale public meetings or multi-stakeholder forums (open to the public, representatives of different stakeholder groups) for dissemination of information, sharing opinions, and discussion.
 - Meet people where they are by going out into the community to ask for feedback. This includes accessible places to find accurate and up-to-date information—online and in community spaces (e.g. libraries, places of worship, health centers, gardening and farming events)
2. **Provide funding** to coordinate and support the advisory board, community engagement plans and development the urban agriculture plan.
 3. **Regular updates to the plan** are essential and should be required to ensure that the plan continues to address the needs of different urban agriculture and community garden stakeholders over time.

Int. 1664: In relation to requiring the office of food policy to formulate a 10-year food policy plan.

Creating a 10-year Food Policy Plan is an exciting step towards raising the profile and importance of food in the City's legislative agenda, agency programs and operations, funding priorities and future policy plans. It will help make significant progress towards the stated goals of reducing hunger, improving nutrition and healthy food access, reducing waste, supporting farm economies and urban agriculture. However, it is critical that the Director of the new Office of Food Policy receives sufficient community input.

Children's Aid has provided impactful, community-based nutrition and food programming for over fifteen years, and we would like an opportunity to share our knowledge and collaborate with other stakeholders to help create a comprehensive, inclusive 10-year food policy plan that addresses the food and nutrition needs of all New Yorkers. We deeply value community input and regularly engage program participants to ensure that their voices are reflected in program design and implementation. Community input is vital in guaranteeing that public programs and policy are sustainable, transparent and effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We support the passage of Int. 1664 with the following amendments:

- Requires and holds the department accountable for including significant and meaningful ongoing opportunities for community input in the plan development and compensate community members for their time.
- We encourage the city to support the creation of an independent Food Policy Council made up of community-based groups, community leaders, and other stakeholders with expertise in food justice, policy, access and insecurity that the Director of the Office of Food Policy would be required to work with and consult in the creation of the 10-Year Food Policy Plan. This council can also include

appointees from the mayor and the City Council, but we encourage community food experts be identified through a public nomination process. We also recommend that the Director of this office be required to meet on a regular basis with this Food Policy Council to allow for more community input into the work of the Office of Food Policy.

- We also recommend that before the 10-Year Food Policy Plan is finalized, the Office of Food Policy hold a series of accessible community meetings across the five boroughs to hear community input and feedback on the plan. These community meetings can be modelled after the intensive community engagement and participatory planning process designed to support Take Care New York 2020¹.
- We also recommend that the 10-Year Food Policy Plan include supporting Women and Minority Owned food businesses and social enterprises in its goals to help improve the long term self sufficiency and food sovereignty of low income communities of color across New York City.
- In the biennial progress reports published by the Office of Food Policy, we encourage the Director to identify opportunities to adapt and enhance the plan to meet the City's ever changing needs.

Int. 1676: In relation to requiring the department of education to report on implementing scratch-cooked school food service.

Many children live in households with limited access to fresh, healthy, and high quality, nutrient-rich food options. School meal programs can provide children, especially those vulnerable to hunger and diet-related disease, with access to healthful foods. According to Edible Schoolyard NYC, 94% of NYC Children don't eat enough vegetables and over 40% of New York City public school children are obese or overweight. Cooking food from scratch in schools is a proven effective strategy for increasing the amount of fresh, healthy produce and wholesome food consumed by children.

Children's Aid provides nutrition and food programming at sixteen of our 22 community schools, and while our programming encourages fresh fruit and vegetable consumption, the school lunches often lack sufficient plant-based options. Even though lunch is now free for all NYC students, many kids throw out much of their lunch on a daily basis. Food waste is a persistent problem throughout DOE cafeterias and Children's Aid believes that scratch cooking, coupled by consistent staff training can help address the issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We support the passage of Int. 1676 with the following amendments:

- Ensure that any progress evaluation or report on DOE's efforts to implement scratch cooking is written by an independent third party. In addition, we ask that the DOE consult with the organization Brigade and the school food managers that have been conducting the scratch food cooking pilot in the Bronx regarding the evaluation.

¹ <https://hesterstreet.org/projects/take-care-new-york-2020-action-planning/>

- Add clarity to the bill language as the “Growing Food Equity in NYC” City Council agenda calling for the DOE to “create an implementation plan to ensure that every school child has access to scratch-cooked, healthy, delicious, and culturally-appropriate menu items.” We recommend that in section 4, legislative language is changed to say the report shall include an implementation plan that in addition to identifying barriers, would also identify what resources are required for implementing a city-wide scratch cooking program such as additional resources, staffing, infrastructure, professional development for teachers and/or food service staff, and a reasonable timeline for achieving these plans. This implementation plan should also include resources and plans for ongoing evaluation of the effort.
- Provide the DOE one year to submit this report to the City Council.

Children’s Aid thanks the City Council for their support of advancing food equity citywide and the opportunity to testify on this important issue. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please feel free to contact me at wreuling@childrensaidnyc.org.



September 17, 2019

Dear Economic Development Committee Chair Vallone, Councilmembers Adams, Ayala, Chin, Gibson, Rosenthal, Espinal Jr. and other Councilmembers of the Committee on Economic Development,

Thank you to the Economic Development Committee and City Councilmembers for sponsoring multiple bills that will support increasing healthy local food access, enterprise, and policy within NYC communities.

My name is Qiana Mickie and I am the Executive Director of Just Food. Just Food is a grassroots nonprofit based in New York City with the aim to shift the power, health, and wealth of historically and economically marginalized communities - in particular Black, Latinx, other communities of color, LGBTQ, mixed income, and small-scale farmers/producers. Just Food connects NYC institutions, businesses, and individuals to sustainable small to mid-scale regional growers and trains community leaders as they work collectively toward a more economically viable and democratic food system. Our work is grounded in the principles of cooperation, solidarity, and equity. Just Food currently has the city's largest network of over 120 CSAs, 30 Community-Run Farmers Markets, and has trained hundreds of community members as chefs, advocates, and managers/operators of community food projects throughout the 5 boroughs. We estimate over 111,000 New Yorkers have access to locally grown produce from our collaborative efforts with partners.

Just Food works with the intent that healthy food can be a driver of racial, environmental, and economic change. We believe this can also be a tenet of the city and the introduction of the multiple bills today is a positive pivot in City legislation. To move this collective of legislation towards implementation calls for the engagement of multiple city agencies, community based organizations, and other stakeholders to work collaboratively and strategically. I am encouraged that this direction forward reflects

how important farm to city initiatives, growing food equity, and stimulating innovation from community gardens to institutions is to this Committee and other municipal leaders.

Having a stronger Office of Food Policy and developing an office of Urban Agriculture to steward these policies and better liaise between city agencies, the community and business sector will ensure a more comprehensive food and agriculture plan and lay the foundation for the infrastructure needed to ensure all New Yorkers - in particular those communities that have been economically and historically marginalized- are included in this path forward.

Just Food is in support of the following bills introduced today that will spark sustainable and equitable food, farm, and enterprise in the City. It is our priority to support and lift up that legislation implemented in New York City have racial, economic, and environmental equity integrated. Just Food works on the principle that urban agriculture and food/ farm policy be seen as critical elements in the City's plan for addressing resiliency, sustainability, and climate change. Sound policy can help leverage city resources to implement innovative approaches to infrastructure, food access, mitigate waste, and increase the vibrancy of neighborhoods within the 5 boroughs. Just Food supports Int. 1663 and 1664 which both address increasing the capacity and influence of the Office of Food Policy and the creation of the Office of Urban Agriculture. Just Food has previously submitted testimony for Int.1661 in which we reference our recommendation to minimize barriers and better engage the municipal levers of power within city agencies so that a director role can be created for Urban Agriculture in order to steward and implement urban agriculture initiatives, policy, and engage diverse stakeholders. It is our further recommendation and support of Int. 1663 and that the Office of Urban Agriculture live within the offices of Office of Sustainability or Office of Resiliency & Recovery. We believe it would ensure Urban Agriculture initiatives will have access to diverse sources of funding (private and public) and the Director of Urban Agriculture would be in direct contact with other intra-agency decision makers such as the leaders of ORR, OS, and the Office of Food Policy in order to execute with cohesion resilient and sustainable efforts. In addition, an Urban Policy Council or taskforce should be developed that consists of multiple seats for diverse stakeholders such as community based growing appointees, community land appointees, commercial growing appointees, youth, grassroots policy advocates, and community leaders. These groups would inform/confer with the Director of Urban Agriculture on priorities, planning, and funding allocations.

Just Food recommends and is in support of Int. 1664. A stronger Office of Food Policy along with the role of Food Policy Director to be filled soon would help foster more collaboration between city agencies, improve engagement with community based organizations and other targeted stakeholders. The Office of Food Policy completing a 10 year plan would provide the city a much needed and innovative food policy framework that would guide and sustain a strong local food economy for years to come. Given the timeline of implementing food policy in order to stimulate infrastructure building and also creating a 10 year food plan, it is imperative that the position of Food Policy Director is filled soon to help steward the increased capacity needed in the Office of Food Policy to execute. Having this position filled with someone that possesses experience with food policy and strategic partnerships within the City as well as within the public/private sector, will also lay a solid foundation of engagement with department leaders including NYC Parks and Recreation, Dept. of City Planning, Office of Resiliency and Recovery, Office of Sustainability, and other city agencies. Many of the bills introduced today along with related legislation such as INT. 1661 introduced earlier this year and previously launched initiatives from the Mayor's Office are a strong signal to how vital food and urban agriculture policy is to the City.

Infrastructure to support small- mid scale food based businesses and community driven wealth is critical and Just Food is in support of legislation that will provide capital and resources to build these elements in our city. There are many community groups and organizations that have tried to address the gaps in food access with limited resources and scarce capital. This is a time in the City to introduce policy that ensures these marginalized groups are no longer left out of the New York food economy. Just Food is in support of Int. 1660 and the City codifying good food purchasing program. Fostering a strong food economy that centers on equity, sustainable farm practices, humane animal stewardship, nutrition, and healthy food access is a priority and why Just Food participates in the Local Economies Working Group of the Good Food Purchasing Program initiative in New York City. I have seen the positive impact of farm to institutional procurement can have in other cities and would like to see this innovative policy here in New York City. What will need to be included in Int. 1660 and its implementation is racial, economic, and environmental equity. Explicit language to help support existing small scale farmers/producers have the capacity and access to be competitive in securing city contracts should also be included in the legislation. Capital will be needed to fund the infrastructure to aggregate, distribute, process, store, and sell food grown within the 5 boroughs and the region to meet institutional standards. An optimal place for city funded institutional level infrastructure is underutilized space at the GrowNYC food hub in Hunts Point and other underutilized spaces within neighborhoods. Developing facilities with packing/processing/cold storage of regional

food would create a local hub to meet institutional level demand. Additional research is needed to assess a collective purchasing model to get food in school pilots, free lunch, and health & hospital initiatives. Int. 1660 could support research along with strategic collaborations across departments such as HRA, ACS, DFTA, DOE ,DYCD, GrowNYC between the GFPP coalition. Just Food also recommends city funds be allocated to support capacity building organizations to develop city based incubators, commercial grade kitchens, and cold/dry storage. Currently, the infrastructure that exists in the City has gaps in the value chain which has severely limited the enterprise of food based businesses - in particular hyper local growers and producers. There are practical farm to institution models and local food procurement of small-scale farmers of color that NYC legislation can replicate such as the work of the Agri-Cultura Network of New Mexico. For successful implementation of Int. 1660 and GFPP in New York City, it must also actively engage small- mid scale farmers -in particular farmers of color.

To truly shift power and increase food access in our neighborhoods, community based groups need to be eligible and access available capital and other resources. Funding should also be considered on the city to be made available to support these efforts. The majority of urban agriculture growing land is under the purview of NYC Park & Recreation. What continues to exist is a lack of comprehensive metrics and data to accurately account for vitality and production within community gardens. The lack of a consistent measuring and data collecting tool to accurately calculate urban scale production and yield has impeded gardeners from demonstrating their effectiveness which has had a simultaneously negative impact in exacerbating the marginalization of these growers. In addition, while there have been revisions to the handbook and rules for growing on NYC Parks and Recreation land- what is still not clear is the approval generating profit through enterprise on public land. This lack of clarity and unwillingness of this department to explore innovations within community gardens has stalled the potential of community-driven enterprise models and generating community wealth these gardens desperately need. Just Food is in support of Int. 1653 and would like to lift up that there is an effective measuring tool called Farming Concrete that the NYC Parks and Recreation gardeners could deploy to collect and begin to measure their outputs. Access to reliable data would also empower gardeners to clearly amplify their impact and revenue potential in reports and grants. There needs to be continued efforts across city agencies and departments to ensure regulations and policy alignment in the support of urban ag production, procurement, and selling that does not unintentionally leave out public land use. Without the allowance of sales on community gardens and clear support of enterprise and innovation within community gardens- it will in effect further marginalize and minimize the power, health, and wealth of a wide swath of communities in the city. The

implications will have local and even federal consequences. The current federal Farm Bill has urban agriculture policies in place and will soon be implemented. If legislation such as Int. 1653 and NYC Park and Recreation regulations aren't modified, the majority of NYC urban agriculture growers will not be eligible for grants and other sources of funding. NYC Parks & Recreation must have regulations that allow for enterprise on public land. Without policies such as INT. 1653 and related ones such as Int. 1652 and Int. 1058, New York City urban agriculture will be set back and clearly cut out under resourced and people of color growers and entrepreneurs.

Just Food wholly supports Int. 1653 and recommends NYC Parks and Recreation shift to include enterprise and explore revenue opportunities on city land. In addition, vacant lands offer the opportunity for valuable capital to become a location for regenerative urban agriculture and enterprise. Just Food is in support of Int. 1652 and efforts of the Department of City Planning to appropriately classify and update data of vacant lands. Accurate classification of vacant land will support assessment and accessibility of land including community gardens to be utilized to foster community wealth. In addition to classification of vacant land, Just Food is encouraged and strongly supports the City to continue to fund community land ownership models such as community land trusts. The community land trust model can also be utilized for vacant land, community gardens, and land under new development. Just Food is also in support of the efforts of the Department of City Planning to explore how zoning can support mixed used development, in particular supporting use of food based businesses.

Just Food strongly supports Int. 1654 and 1659 which calls for increasing neighborhood awareness of farm- to city projects and SNAP to seniors- both policies amplify the efforts of sustainable farmers to get local, healthy food within all communities of NYC. This is the core of the work of Just Food and our partners. Just Food has sustained the city's largest network of CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and continues to offer technical resources and training to community members to start their own community led food projects like Community- Run Farmers Markets. We were delighted to support Council Member's Johnson's efforts to increase awareness of existing direct to marketing opportunities of regional food in the creation of the New York City Farm to City Map. The Farm to City Map actively connects to Just Food's Value Chain Map and easy access to a vibrant network of regional farmers/producers, CSAs, and Farmers Markets. This resource continues to help us refine how we reach the most vulnerable in our communities such as homebound seniors to increase their local food access. Just Food encourages the City to pass Int. 1654 to support new partnerships and resources to better help NYC residents find and

support local food and farm businesses within their neighborhood. There are multiple, cost effective initiatives that this policy can support to promote community food projects like farmers markets and CSAs and current initiatives of the Mayor such as Investment in Youth Homelessness, and Fair Fare program.

Food insecure New York City residents need access to incentives that enable them to purchase healthy food. Food based incentives programs such as Healthbucks generates a multiplier effect to increase food security, awareness of farmer's markets in communities, and farm viability of regional growers. Just Food strongly supports the urban- rural linkages NYC under resourced and communities of color to small scale, regional farmers. Healthbucks redemptions at our Community-Run Farmers Markets have enabled farmers to sustain their downstate markets and increase sales while also increasing healthy food consumption in the most neighborhoods in need. Just Food supports Int. 1650 to increase promotion of the Health Bucks program and farmers markets.

Food insecurity is on the rise nationally - in particular for seniors. Studies have shown that nearly 8.6 million seniors in the U.S. are dealing with the threat of hunger. Eligible seniors are less likely to be signed up Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a critical safety net program. Over the course of the past year, Just Food has also recorded a significant increase in the amount of requests of seniors, including homebound seniors, seeking information on how to access local food and sites that accept SNAP. Just Food supports Int. 1659 and strongly encourages a cross sector plan to identify and enroll seniors into SNAP that engages community based organizations as well as city agencies. Sites for SNAP information should also be considered as sites for local food access and nutrition education. The desire would be for seniors to not only enroll in SNAP, but to increase their local food consumption and purchases. A comprehensive plan to support seniors in enrolling for SNAP should also include direct linkages local food, nutrition education, and access. This approach would deepen the impact of addressing food insecurity and also maximize the SNAP program. Just Food recommends a city based initiative that connects the offices of DTFA and Council of Aging, to community based groups like Just Food that can deepen outreach to senior populations to better understand the SNAP program and also offer information on how to find accessible local food markets such as CSAs, farm shares, and farmers markets. Making strong connections to regional, fresh food to community members will further strengthen our city and regional economy while also providing a much needed community benefit. SNAP benefits can enable seniors to purchase more food beyond their limited budget. In addition, fresh food should also be an option for homebound seniors in need.

Just Food has a long standing Community Chef program that has trained over hundreds of local Community Chefs and continues to provide trainings to other targeted groups to learn basic culinary skills, the importance of seasonal food, and local sourcing options from small scale hyper local and regional farmers. Also known as scratch cooking, we have found trained over hundreds of community members of all ages in this practice. The need for scratch cooking for vulnerable populations is on the rise. Just Food has experienced an increased interest within senior groups to learn more practical cooking techniques, culturally appropriate yet nutritious recipes that are easy to make as well as tailored to their dietary and medical needs. Home Health Care aides who tend to seniors should also be seen as ambassadors to local food are a great resource to train in scratch cooking. Just Food continues to do research on programs such as the Home Health Aide Training in operation at Three Sisters Kitchen in Albuquerque, New Mexico that train Home Health Care aides to perform scratch cooking for their clients utilizing fresh, local food. Community Chef training would not only help promote healthful cooking techniques, but also increase food consumption within this community. Community Chefs also provide fun, easy to follow cooking demonstrations throughout the city. The connection between culturally and culturally rich foods should no longer be ignored to vulnerable populations such as seniors and students. Just Food supports Int. 1676. Another vulnerable population that would benefit from SNAP redemption of local, fresh food are public college students. Res. 1024 would help this growing population of food insecure residents by expanding the eligibility to SNAP.

Thank you again for the opportunity to lift up our recommendations to the Committee.

Qiana Mickie
Executive Director

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katelyn Andrews

Address: _____

I represent: Live On NY

Address: 49 W. 43rd St. 7th floor

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charlene Rudder

Address: Bronx Health REACH - Includ

I represent: for Family Health

Address: 2006 Madison Ave NYC 10035

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Greg Weithman

Address: _____

I represent: G-One - Quantum

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Manhattan Borough Pres. Gale A. Brewer

Address: 1 Centre Street, 19th floor

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the **THE COUNCIL** *Sergeant-at-Arms*
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

49

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 5/2

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cristina Gonzalez, MD

Address: 64 Rhodes Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801

I represent: physician perspective

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the **THE COUNCIL** *Sergeant-at-Arms*
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: YADIRA GARCIA

Address: 595 Columbus Avenue

I represent: HAPPY HEALTHY LATINA -

Address: 95 Cabrini Blvd 6D NY NY 10032

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

47

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1654, 1663, 1676 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joshua Delgado

Address: 33 West both street Suite 1211

I represent: Teens for Food Justice

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1654, 1663, 1676 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Messiah Timmons

Address: 33 West both street, Suite 1211

I represent: Teens for Food Justice

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joel Belg

Address: 1 Plaza st W Brooklyn

I represent: Hungry Free America

Address: 50 Broad St, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Natasha Godby

Address: _____

I represent: HRA, Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mallika Barry Sutton

Address: 325 Clinton Ave

I represent: HRA, Executive Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1652 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alison McCabe

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Dept. of City Planning

Address: 170 Broadway

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1663 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LINDSEY-PAIGE MCCLOY

Address: _____

I represent: MAYOR'S OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Address: 253 BROADWAY 14th FLOOR

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1675 Res. No. 1681

in favor in opposition

and 1676

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Tricarico

Address: 44-36 Vernon Blvd, Queens

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 52 Chambers

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1650-1654 Res. No. 1024-

in favor in opposition

1660, 1663, 1675, 1680, 21681
Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wendy O'Shields

Address: _____

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9.18.19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Hyatt

Address: 215 Market Street #604

I represent: The Food Party at Columbia

Address: Columbia University

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Freeman

Address: NRDC 40 West 20th St NYC 10011

I represent: Natural Resources Defense Council

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Hughes, Project Renewal

Address: _____

I represent: Project Renewal

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Sam Biederman - Assistant Commissioner NYC Parks

Address: The Arsenal

I represent: Kill NYC Parks

Address: The Arsenal

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Bill Cosasso - Director GreenThumb

Address: The Arsenal

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: BRIDGET ANDERSON

Address: NYC DEPT. OF SANITATION

I represent: DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Address: BUREAU OF RECYCLING +

SUSTAINABILITY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Erin McDonald

Address: City Hall

I represent: Mayor's office

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kim Kessler, Assistant Commissioner,

Address: Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention

I represent: Health Department

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

NYC GOOD FOOD
PURCHASING PROGRAM

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1060 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RIBKA GETACHEW

Address: 110 WALL STREET NY, NY 10005

I represent: NYC GOOD FOOD PURCHASING POLICY COALITION

Address: COMMUNITY FOOD ADVOCATES
110 WALL ST. NEW YORK, NY 10005

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Sept. 18, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melanie Button

Address: 325 Clinton Ave 8th

I represent: BRIGHTER BITES

Address: 27-01 Queens Plaza North, 13 floor

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1664 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Greg Silverman

Address: 0275 W. 181 NY NY 10053

I represent: West Side Captain Agent House

Address: 263 W. 86th NY NY 10024

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: EDWINA LUC

Address: 8041 135th street Apt 6D Jamaica NY 11435

I represent: CUNY School of Public Health

Address: 12

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1675-2019 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisette Rubio

Address: 411 W 158th St Apt 7D NY NY 10032

I represent: CUNY School of Public Health

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1659 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Valentino Graci

Address: 25 4th Place Brooklyn, NY 11231

I represent: myself

Address: N/A

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicholas Freudenberg

Address: 55 West 125th St 5th floor

I represent: CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute

Address: same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1666/1681/8 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jerome Nd France

Address: 6 e 32nd St. #

I represent: city Harvest

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1660 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DAVID FRENCH

Address: _____

I represent: LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1660 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alicia Rodriguez

Address: 22 N. 6th St Apt 200 Brooklyn, NY 11249

I represent: The Land and Sea Institute

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 11659 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Allison Gatto

Address: _____

I represent: Self - Student at Cuny School of Public Health

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1674 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Isabelle Adams

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1660 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/19/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jaime McBeth, RDN

Address: 625 W. 140, 10631

I represent: Fortune Society

Address: 625 W. 140, 10631

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Juan C Pinzon

Address: 633 3rd Ave

I represent: Community Service Society

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Strong

Address: 496 Kenny St

I represent: NYC Healthy School Food Alliance

Address: _____

child

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Harper Will

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

child

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

child

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tyler

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1676 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raynika Trent

Address: 525 W. 120th St NY, NY 10027

I represent: Laurie M. Tisch Center Food Education

Address: & Policy Program in Nutrition Teachers College Columbia University

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1676 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claire Raffel

Address: 525 W. 120th St NY, NY 10027

I represent: Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education's

Address: Policy Program in Nutrition Teachers College Columbia University

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1650, 1659, 1664, 1666 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robin Vitale

Address: 10 E 40th St 11th Fl

I represent: American Heart Association

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1653 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Caroline Sheehan

Address: 247 21st St. Apt. 2R Brooklyn NY

I represent: N/A

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 1024

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tamara McDonald

Address: 1353 East 40 Street Bklyn NY 11234

I represent: N/A

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

NYC GOOD FOOD
PURCHASING
COALITION

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1660 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9-18-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALEXIS HARRISON

Address: 282A KOSCIUSKO ST, #1

I represent: BEDFORD STUYVESANT REST. CORP.

Address: 1308 FULTON ST.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1676 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deborah Soffel

Address: 9608 67th Ave Rego Park, NY 11374

I represent: Wellness in the Schools

Address: 31 W. 125th Street, NYC 10027

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1660 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Suzanne Adeby

Address: 275 7th Ave, NY, NY

I represent: Food Chain Workers Alliance

Address: _____

NYC
Good
Food
Fundraising
Coalition

GFPP

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1060 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michelle Villagomez

Address: 520 ETH AVE. NY NY 10018

I represent: ASPCA

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1660 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/18/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LAWRENCE BEN

Address: 237 54TH STREET, BROOKLYN NY 11211

I represent: RETAIL WHOLESALE AND DEPARTMENT STORE / UNION (RWDSU)

Address: 370 7TH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10001

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1659, 1675 Res. No. 1024, 1025

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LAUREN PHILLIPS

Address: 39 B'Way NY, NY 10006

I represent: Food Bank For New York City

Address: 59 B'Way NY, NY 10006