

Dear Members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Jay Lyon and I am a senior at Michigan State University. It is my honor to serve as advocacy chair of the Spartan Food Security Council, the only *student* organization at MSU addressing food insecurity. The mission of our organization is to achieve greater food security through advocacy, education, and service. I have been working with the Spartan Food Security Council and partner organizations for the past year to bring the Hunger Free Campus Grant Act to Michigan. I fully believe this piece of legislation is necessary to address student food insecurity on, and off, college campuses.

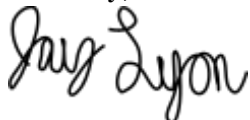
Student food insecurity is an increasing problem in today's economic and educational landscape. Rising costs of food, housing, and tuition cause many students to forgo meals. Students are having to work more hours to afford everyday expenses, and have less time to prepare healthy meals for themselves (and, in some cases, family members too). Our dining halls are overcrowded and understaffed, which make it more difficult for students to fit healthy and consistent meals into their busy schedules. Unhealthy foods, while more affordable, force students to choose between eating non-nutritious meals or not at all.

Aditi Kulkarni, Co-President of the Spartan Food Security Council, conducted a survey of James Madison College students at Michigan State University; more than half of whom indicated that hunger or lack of access to food impacted their education in some way. This survey took place at a small, residential college within a Big Ten university. Still, food insecurity is rampant there. Far too many students suffer from neglected basic needs, which is why the Spartan Food Security Council is committed to supporting these students with institutional resources like those Hunger Free Campus grants would provide.

The Hunger Free Campus Grant Act is an adaptable, multi-faceted approach to addressing student hunger. It ensures healthy food is always available, and accessible, to college students. With the recent end of expanded pandemic-era SNAP eligibility, food assistance is harder for students to receive than ever before. The Hunger Free Campus Act will rectify this, and ensure that colleges and universities have the resources they need to address basic needs insecurity. Further, it will empower students to take advantage of resources they otherwise might not.

On behalf of the entire Spartan Food Security Council, I would like to thank Chair Glanville and every member of the Higher Education committee for considering this legislation. We truly believe it is the most effective way to address the pervasive problem that is student food insecurity. We urge you to support the Hunger Free Campus Grant Act HB 5097.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Lyon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jay Lyon
Spartan Food Security Council Advocacy Chair
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