



To: Governor Charlie Baker  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

CC: Marylou Sudders, Secretary, Executive Office Health and Human Services  
Jeffery McCue, Commissioner, Department of Transitional Assistance  
Members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation

January 16, 2019

Dear Governor Baker:

Project Bread is very concerned about the impact of a prolonged government shutdown on the 770,000 Massachusetts residents who rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – and thousands more government employees now attempting to survive without a paycheck— and urges you to be a national leader in advocating for the President and the US Senate to end the shutdown. We applaud you for convening bipartisan Governors in the past on critical issues, and we ask you to do so again, leveraging your position as a leading Republican Governor and member of the Republican Governors Association.

Our mission is to prevent and end hunger in Massachusetts and, as such, we proudly supported 315 community food programs in 97 cities and towns with \$1 million in grants through our 2018 Walk for Hunger. Despite the tremendous efforts of concerned community members across the states, we know that the emergency food network is unable to support the residents of Massachusetts if federal funding for SNAP, school meals, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) runs out. For every meal provided by a food bank, food pantry, or community meal program, twelve meals are provided by SNAP. There is simply no way charity can expand twelve-fold to handle this crisis.

We are encouraged by the steps your administration, particularly DTA, has taken to weather this crisis, but there is only one solution that will bring solvency to these important programs and stability to the people who utilize them: reopening the federal government.

If the federal government does not end by March, we believe that the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) may only be able to give households part of their SNAP benefit, at which point your administration will face the painful decision to use tens of millions of state funds to cover the cost of federal programs or watch as

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THE WALK FOR HUNGER

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overburdened food pantries turn hungry families away. By April, this unfortunate reality would also hit pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants, and toddlers receiving assistance through WIC and children receiving federally subsidized school meals.

The most direct course is for the US Senate to vote on a clean continuing resolution that reopens the federal government without authorizing additional funds for border security. This does not preclude further discussion on the matter, but it does give certainty to the over 38 million SNAP recipients nationwide and roughly 800,000 federal employees, 8,000 in the Commonwealth, going without pay.

In addition to the existing need in our communities, our FoodSource Hotline has heard from households directly impacted by the shutdown such as Ellie. A TSA agent at Logan Airport and a single mother of three from Boston, Ellie hasn't received a paycheck and is worried about falling behind on her rent as well as daycare payments. She has to stay current or risk losing her kids' spots. She shared her concerns with a Project Bread Hotline counselor earlier this week. "I don't know how I'm going to make this work. If I don't get paid, how can I afford to send my children to daycare?" She has modest savings – a little over \$400 and knows it isn't enough to cover all of her expenses next month. Her rent alone is \$1,500. Project Bread screened Ellie for SNAP and assisted her in applying online. If SNAP funding is depleted before the shutdown ends, Ellie will find herself in an even worse position than she was before she reached out.

Governor Baker, on behalf of Massachusetts residents like Ellie and those who normally utilize SNAP and other critical programs, please urge President Trump, Senate Majority Leader McConnell, and Senate Republicans to end this shutdown.

Sincerely,  
Erin McAleer



President  
Project Bread-The Walk for Hunger

