

March 9, 2023.

The Honorable Omar Fateh, Chair  
Senate Higher Education Committee  
3219 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Fateh and Members of the Committee:

The Undergraduate Student Government at the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities currently has 140 student representatives across all colleges and majors, and we serve over 30,000 undergraduates who make up our student body. Our organization works to combat food insecurity for our students through our Mobile Market Program, a low-cost, heavily discounted mobile grocery store, and by sharing resources that we have on campus like our Food Pantry and our Meal Distribution program. However, this is not enough to combat hunger on our campus, so we support the Hunger-Free Program's expansion.

Expansion of the Hunger-Free Program would impact students on our campus by allowing investments to help strengthen our resources on campus. An investment into our food pantries would allow for purchasing of equipment to allow a broader selection and storage of food items for students, as students are currently limited to what amount of food they can receive. An increased investment also means that our Food Pantry can operate more frequently. Currently, our food pantry operates once a month for three days. Investing in our food pantries would allow for more frequent operations, as almost half of college students worry that they will run out of food before they get money to buy more.

According to our Spring Survey, about 51% of our students live a 15 or more-minute walk away from their nearest grocery store. With our campus already being classified as a food desert, working to ensure that our resources on campus can support our students who are already financially burdened with the high cost of tuition and cost of living is necessary. Making sure the resources offered on our campus are more accessible is what this bill is working to do, which is why the Undergraduate Student Government of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities is in support of Senate File 2242.

Respectfully,

*Siya Sakhardande*

Siya Sakhardande, 2022-23 State Coordinator