

Senate Bill

Act Number: 2022-7

21 November 2022

Introduced by: Senator Bibhu Bhatta, Senate Vice President Aime Lara

Proposed by: President Paolo Miyashiro Bedoya, Vice President Janea Tozer-Murphy

Whereas: The Student Government Association (SGA) of Ramapo College of New Jersey is the liaison body to the Faculty, Staff, Administration, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Governors of Ramapo College of New Jersey;

Whereas: Food insecurity among college students is a widespread problem. Out of 195,000 college students surveyed in the Fall of 2020 by the Hope Center, 29% struggled with food insecurity, and 3 out of 5 students struggled with basic needs insecurity;

Whereas: Ramapo College began administering surveys in the Fall of 2017 to assess student food insecurities and other basic needs insecurities, the first of which gleaned the following statistics:

- 18% of students need basic supplies (clothes and toiletries) on a daily to monthly basis
- 15% of students need food on a daily to monthly basis
- 3% of students needed housing on a daily to monthly basis;

Whereas: The Hunger Free Campus Act requires each institution to distribute a state survey about food insecurity. According to the survey conducted by Ramapo College in the Spring of 2021:

- 33% of Ramapo students reported experiencing some level of food insecurity
- 13% of Ramapo students reported skipping meals
- 12% of Ramapo Students reported reducing the size of their meals because they didn't have enough money;

Whereas: The Center for Health and Counseling Services conducted the ACHA-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA) in the Spring of 2022 and concluded the following:

- 44.5% of students surveyed experienced low or very low food security
- 45% said they couldn't afford to eat balanced meals
- 43% said that the food they bought didn't last, and they didn't have enough money to get more
- 34% said that, at least once, they cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food
- 24% said that they ate less than they felt they should because there wasn't enough money for food

Whereas: Ramapo College and the Center for Student Involvement have continually been committed to civic engagement and community service, and the Civic and Community Engagement Center was established in Fall 2011 to formally streamline civic and community awareness and engagement;

Whereas: Ramapo College has a long history of being a supportive campus for students struggling with food insecurity and other basic needs insecurities;

Whereas: Ramapo College has implemented a robust series of programming for Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week for over 20 years;

Whereas: The Student Government Association and staff, faculty, and administration created the We Care program in the Fall of 2016 to serve as a wraparound program for students;

Whereas: The We Care Program at Ramapo College of New Jersey is committed to providing the right resources and assisting students with basic needs insecurity, including housing and food insecurity;

Whereas: The We Care program established a campus Food Pantry in the Spring of 2018;

Whereas: The We Care program now includes a Student Relief Fund, Clothing Closet, and Laptop Upcycle program, in addition to the original Food Pantry;

Whereas: The Hunger-Free Campus Act (A4702/S3239) requires the Secretary of Higher Education to establish a grant program to address food insecurity among students enrolled in public institutions of higher education and appropriates a \$1 million fund;

WHEREAS: Ramapo College of New Jersey is applying for the Hunger-Free Campus Grant;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: The Student Government Association supports Ramapo College's application for the Hunger-Free Campus Grant.

Paolo Miyashiro Bedoya

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President '22 - '23

Ashley Gomez

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Senate President '22- '23