

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 292

By Senators Grady, Woelfel, Caputo, Jeffries, and

Plymale

[Introduced January 11, 2024; referred
to the Committee on Education; and then to the
Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,
 2 designated §18B-22-1, §18B-22-2, §18B-22-3, §18B-22-4, and §18B-22-5, all relating to
 3 creating the Hunger-Free Campus Act; providing for a short title; establishing the act and
 4 providing for a legislative purpose; authorizing the Higher Education Policy Commission to
 5 implement program; providing qualifications for campuses to be designated as hunger-free
 6 zones; allowing for grant funding of hunger-free zones; providing for reporting on the
 7 impact of any grants; and providing for an effective date.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 22. HUNGER FREE CAMPUS ACT.

§18B-22-1. Short title.

1 This article shall be known and may be cited as the "Hunger-Free Campus Act."

§18B-22-2. Enactment and purpose.

1 The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission shall establish a Hunger-Free
 2 Campus Grant Program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide grants to public
 3 institutions of higher education that have one or more campuses that are designated by the
 4 secretary as hunger-free campuses. The purpose of the grant funding shall be to:

- 5 (1) Address student hunger;
- 6 (2) Leverage more sustainable solutions to address basic food needs on campus;
- 7 (3) Raise awareness of services currently offered on campus which address basic food
 8 needs; and
- 9 (4) Continue to build strategic partnerships at the local, state, and national levels to
 10 address food insecurity among students.

§18B-22-3. Campus qualification.

1 In order to be designated as a hunger-free campus, the institution shall:
 2 (1) Establish a Campus Hunger Task Force that meets a minimum of three times per
 3 academic year to set at least two goals with action plans;

4 (2) Designate a staff member responsible for assisting students with enrollment in West
5 Virginia Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);

6 (3) Provide options for students to utilize SNAP benefits at campus stores that meet the
7 federal standards set by the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of
8 Agriculture;

9 (4) Participate in an awareness day campaign activity and plan a campus awareness event
10 during the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week;

11 (5) Provide at least one physical food pantry on campus, or enable students to receive food
12 through a separate, stigma-free arrangement;

13 (6) Develop a "Swipe Out Hunger" student meal credit sharing program, or designate a
14 certain amount of funds for free meal vouchers that might otherwise be raised through a "Swipe
15 Out Hunger" program; and

16 (7) Annually conduct a student survey on hunger, developed by the West Virginia Higher
17 Education Policy Commission, and submit the results of the survey and a best practices campus
18 profile to the secretary at a time prescribed by the secretary for inclusion in a comparative profile of
19 each campus designated as a hunger-free campus. In the development of the survey, the
20 secretary may utilize any existing surveys designed to collect information on food insecurity
21 among students enrolled in public institutions of higher education.

22 The secretary shall allocate grant funding to each public institution of higher education that
23 has one or more campuses designated by the secretary as a hunger-free campus in accordance
24 with the criteria established pursuant to this article. The secretary shall determine the amount of
25 each grant which shall be used by the institution to further address food insecurity among students
26 enrolled in the institution. Any and all grant funding shall be made from any moneys received from
27 legislative appropriations or from any other sources provided for purposes of this article.

§18B-22-4. Reporting requirement.

1 The secretary shall submit a report to the Governor, and to the Legislature no later than two

2 years after the establishment of the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program. The report shall
3 include, but not be limited to, the number and amounts of the grant awards, the impact the grant
4 program has had on establishing additional hunger-free campuses at public institutions of higher
5 education and reducing the number of students experiencing food insecurity, and
6 recommendations on the expansion of the grant program.

§18B-22-5. **Effective** **date.**

1 This article shall take effect immediately upon passage.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create the "Hunger-Free Campus Act," which requires the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission to establish a grant program to address food insecurity among students enrolled in public institutions of higher education.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.