

The House Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs offers the following substitute to SB 177:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to agriculture, so as to
2 enact the "Georgia Food Insecurity Eradication Act"; to provide for definitions; to create the
3 Georgia Food Security Advisory Council; to provide for duties; to provide for appointments
4 and reimbursements; to provide for reporting requirements; to provide for related matters;
5 to provide for an effective date and automatic repeal; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
6 purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to agriculture, is amended by
10 adding a new chapter to read as follows:

11 "CHAPTER 24

12 2-24-1.

13 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the 'Georgia Food Insecurity Eradication
14 Act.'

S. B. 177 (SUB)

15 2-24-2.

16 As used in this chapter, the term:

17 (1) 'Council' means the Georgia Food Security Advisory Council.

18 (2) 'Food bank' means an established nonprofit charitable organization which is qualified
19 as exempt from taxation under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal
20 Revenue Code of 1986 and which, as part of an existing food bank network, maintains
21 a food distribution operation providing food to nonprofit food pantries and feeding
22 centers that offer groceries or meals to persons in need of food assistance.

23 (3) 'Food insecurity' means a household-level economic condition of limited financial
24 resources or uncertain access to adequate food.

25 (4) 'SNAP' means the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

26 (5) 'WIC program' means the federally funded health and nutrition program for infants
27 and children aged one to five years (including foster children), pregnant women,
28 breastfeeding mothers (up to one year), postpartum women (up to six months), and a
29 low-income parent or guardian who is the sole provider of children under age five who
30 are at risk of food insecurity and who are at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty
31 level.

32 2-24-3.

33 (a) There is established the Georgia Food Security Advisory Council created within the
34 Department of Agriculture, and the council shall:

35 (1) Advise the General Assembly and all state agencies as appropriate on best practices
36 to alleviate food insecurity;

37 (2) Recommend regulatory solutions to the WIC program. The solutions should include
38 but are not necessarily limited to changes that support an easier process for grocery store
39 operators to obtain and maintain their WIC license;

- 40 (3) Recommend ways the State of Georgia can use tax credits, including the New Market
 41 Tax Credit, as an economic incentive to create and maintain grocery stores in
 42 food-insecure areas;
 43 (4) Recommend ways to maximize current educational programs that educate the public
 44 on purchasing and consuming healthy foods;
 45 (5) Recommend ways to maximize current funding efforts to assist food banks and food
 46 pantries;
 47 (6) Recommend policies which expand the number of farmers' markets which may
 48 accept SNAP benefits;
 49 (7) Recommend policies that encourage the use of food co-ops and community gardens
 50 located in Georgia;
 51 (8) Recommend policies that increase collaboration between the State of Georgia and
 52 nonprofits which seek to eradicate food insecurity;
 53 (9) Recommend policies that increase collaboration between the State of Georgia and
 54 private entities which seek to end food insecurity;
 55 (10) Create bylaws not in conflict with this Code section; and
 56 (11) Research and identify best practices to reduce food insecurity and recommend
 57 findings to agencies, departments, and organizations to use in alleviating food insecurity.

58 2-24-4.

59 (a) The Georgia Food Security Advisory Council shall consist of at least 15 members as
 60 follows:

61 (1) Three ex officio members as follows:

62 (A) The Commissioner of Agriculture or his or her designee;

63 (B) The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services or his or her designee

64 (C) The State School Superintendent or his or her designee;

65 (2) Four members appointed by the Governor as follows:

66 (A) One citizen who shall serve as chairperson of the council and who shall not be a
67 state employee;

68 (B) One representative from the Department of Public Health;

69 (C) One representative from the Department of Early Care and Learning;

70 (D) One representative from an institution of higher learning dedicated to alleviating
71 food insecurity;

72 (3) Four members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

73 (A) One representative from a hospital or health system with programming seeking to
74 end food insecurity;

75 (B) One representative from a food policy council;

76 (C) One grocery or retail store owner or operator that is authorized to accept benefits
77 from the SNAP and WIC programs; and

78 (D) One representative from a municipal chamber of commerce located in an urban
79 area;

80 (4) Four members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives as follows:

81 (A) One Georgia farmer;

82 (B) One CEO of a food bank or food bank supporting organization that is part of a
83 statewide network dedicated to solving food insecurity through increased access to
84 emergency food assistance and other federal nutrition programs;

85 (C) One representative from a municipal chamber of commerce located in a rural area;
86 and

87 (D) One representative who is an owner or operator of a local community farmers'
88 market.

89 (b) Any vacancy on the council resulting from the resignation of a member or otherwise
90 shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

91 (c) The council members shall receive no salary.

92 2-24-5.

93 (a) Meetings shall be at the call of the chairperson. Meetings may be held in person or
94 virtually as often as the chairperson deems necessary, but shall not be held fewer than two
95 times each calendar year. The council shall provide meaningful opportunities for public
96 input at meetings.

97 (b) The Department of Agriculture shall provide a space in either Atlanta, Georgia, or
98 another designated space as agreed upon by the majority of the council for the purposes of
99 council meetings.

100 2-24-6.

101 (a) Beginning July 1, 2024, and no later than July 1 of each year thereafter, the council
102 shall submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly reporting:

103 (1) Any and all activities undertaken by the council in the past year, and any progress
104 made toward the mission of the council; and

105 (2) Recommendations for actions or policies that may be undertaken by the Governor or
106 the General Assembly to alleviate food insecurity.

107 (b) Prior to submission, a draft of the annual report shall be made available for
108 dissemination and public comment at a public meeting.

109 2-24-7.

110 This chapter shall stand automatically repealed on June 30, 2026."

111 **SECTION 2.**

112 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
113 without such approval.

114

SECTION 3.

115 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.