

January 30, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Texas Legislature

The Texas Capitol

1100 Congress Ave.

Austin, TX 78701

To the Honorable Members of the Texas Legislature:

We, the undersigned faith leaders and clergy from communities across Texas, write to you as members of diverse faith traditions that call for justice, dignity, and compassion for all. As leaders who regularly witness the struggles of those within our communities facing hunger, we are compelled to speak on their behalf.

Ensuring that all Texans, regardless of their circumstances, can access essential resources with dignity is not only a reflection of our values but a fundamental responsibility we share in building a just and compassionate society. We are united in our belief that ensuring every person has access to the basic necessities of life, including food, is a moral imperative.

Food insecurity in Texas has reached a crisis point, with an alarming 16.9% of Texans struggling to put food on the table, the second-highest rate in the nation. This rate is more than 4.5% higher than the U.S. average and marks a 1.4% increase compared to last year. This trend demands urgent action.

Our current systems are leaving far too many individuals and families without the resources they need to thrive. Factors like job loss, rising living costs, or health crises — often beyond people's control — can push even the most hardworking Texans into hunger. Protecting and strengthening programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the cornerstone of our nation's nutrition safety net, is essential for both the dignity of struggling Texans and the prosperity of our communities.

When Texas invests in improving the efficiency of its safety net programs — such as implementing the Summer EBT program to keep kids fed during the summer, investing in necessary upgrades to Texas' benefit system, and streamlining program eligibility — we can maximize the amount of federal dollars flowing into the state to support those in need.

These funds not only help struggling Texans access the nutrition and financial security they need; they also serve as an economic boost for local businesses and communities.

Our faith traditions teach us to feed the hungry, care for the vulnerable, and build systems of governance that reflect compassion and justice. We encourage you to administer these safety net programs in a way that reflects these values and eliminates unnecessary hardship for Texans already facing difficult circumstances. This legislative session, we ask you to prioritize policies — such as implementing the Summer EBT program and modernizing the SNAP eligibility system — that honor the inherent dignity of all Texans and make meaningful progress toward ending hunger in our state.

We stand ready to support efforts that prioritize the well-being of our neighbors and create a Texas where everyone can thrive.

Sincerely,

Rev. Laurie Anderson, Dallas

Rev. Tim Anderson, Austin

Rev. Ruben Andrade, Waco

Rev. Dara Austin, Dallas

Rev. Holly Bandel, Sachse

Rabbi Neil Blumofe, Austin

Rev. Stacey Brown, Grand Prairie

Rev. Dr Douglas Brown, Fort Worth

Rev. Marianne Brown-Trigg, Denton

Rabbi Amy Cohen, Austin

Pastor Armel Crocker, Dallas

Rev. Debra Crumpton, Arlington

Rev. Beth Dana, Dallas

Rev. Ashley Dellagiacoma, Houston

Rev. Monica E Diaz, Austin

Rev. Barbara Dunlap, Fort Worth

Rev. Ralph Emerson, Fort Worth

Rev. Jason Evans, Melissa

Rabbi Alan Freedman, Austin

Rev. Dr Ruben Garcia, Fort Worth

Pastor Jack Gilmore, Paige

Cantor Abby Gostein, Austin

Rev. Jermaine Grandberry, Bedford

Rev. Jonathan Greer, Dallas

Rabbi Will Hall, Austin

Rev. Matthew Hall, Fort Worth

Pastor Demarcus Hornsby, Fort Worth

Rabbi Daniel Horwitz, Houston

Rev. Terrence Howard, Fort Worth

Rev. Darrell Jefferson, Heartland

Rev. Charles Johnson, Fort Worth

Rev. Jenna Johnson, Wylie

Rabbi Nancy Kasten, Dallas

Rev. Kristin Klade, Fort Worth

Rabbi David Lyon, Houston

Rabbi Erin Mason, Bellaire

Rev. Dr. George Mason, Dallas

Rev. Dr. George Mason, Dallas

Rev. Annie McGregor Meek, Copeville

Rabbi Dr. Sabine Meyer, Waco
Rev. Dr. Robyn Michalove, Fort Worth
Rev. Amy Moore, Dallas
Rev. Deborah Morgan-Stokes, Dallas
Rabbi Steven Morgen, Houston
Rev. Heather Mustain, Plano
Rev. Dana Norton, Mesquite
Rabbi Shaul Osadchey, Houston
Rabbi Andrew Paley, Dallas
Rev. Jonathan Perry, Richardson
Rev. Tomeca Richardson, Fort Worth
Sister Patricia Ridgley, Dallas
Rabbi Debra Robbins, Dallas
Rev. Kantrice Robinson, Waco
Rabbi Adam Roffman, Dallas
Rabbi David Rosen, Houston
Rabbi Adrienne Scott, Houston
Rabbi Daniel Septimus, Austin
Rev. Ashley Anne Sipe, Lewisville
Rev. Barry Smith, Austin
Rev. Taylor Smith, The Colony
Rev. Kerry Smith, Dallas
Pastor Joseph Solomon, Copperas Cove
Rev. Brandie Spletzer, Arlington

Rev. Dr. Mary Spradlin, Fort Worth

Rabbi Dr. Eleanor Steinman, Austin

Rabbi Brian Strauss, Houston

Rev Beth Stuyck, Fort Worth

Rabbi Ari Sunshine, Dallas

Pastor Kentris Sweat, Nacogdoches

Rev. Dr. Neil Thomas, Dallas

Rev. Dr. Harold VanArsdale, Killeen

Rev. Kristen Von Gonten, Belton

Cantor Renee Waghalter, Missouri City

Rabbi Shira Wallach, Dallas

Rev. Laura Walters, Dallas

Rev. Kristin Warthen, Arlington

Rev. Ginger Watson, Fort Worth

Cantor Hallie Weiner, Richardson

Pastor Joseph Williams, Fort Worth

Rabbi David Young, Austin

Rabbi Ben Zeidman, El Paso

Rabbi Brian Zimmerman, Fort Worth