



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham and Abinanti Lead Approval of Bill to Increase Food Donations

PETE HARCKHAM July 24, 2020

| ISSUE: **HUNGER PREVENTION, CORONAVIRUS; COVID-19; FOOD BANKS, HEALTH AND NUTRITION, FOOD BANKS**



*Albany, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblyman Tom Abinanti announced today that the State Legislature has approved their bill to increase food donations by requiring supermarkets to make excess food available to qualifying entities that help feed residents in need.

Titled the Excess Food Act, the bill (S.4176A / A.4398A) addresses a sad fact: hunger and food insecurity are on the rise across the nation, now even more because of the economic devastation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet nearly 40% of the food produced in the U.S. ends up thrown away, uneaten. Once Harckham and Abinanti's bill is signed into law, guidelines will exist for supermarkets to donate food to non-profit or religious organizations that provide food free to needy persons.

"This bill ensures that, in New York, food formerly destined for landfills will now be available for the more than two million state residents who are food insecure," said Harckham. "And with so many great community-based organizations and initiatives at work to help our neighbors in need, making sure they have 'access to the excess' will be all around beneficial."

"Some people call it food insecurity, but the kid who goes to school every day without lunch calls it hunger," said Abinanti. "This is about making sure that the food banks and soup kitchens that feed the hungry in our communities have enough food."

The excess food from grocery stores will be made available to various food pantries, food banks, soup kitchen and other entities that are providing free food to community member who are food insecure. The legislation states it is up to these entities to pick the food up; providing stores are not obligated to have it delivered. And the donated food will be edible items that are safe to be consumed but have not been sold or used by the supermarket because of labeling, appearance or surplus. There are other restrictions on the food to be donated as well.

The legislation also takes into consideration the positive environmental and economic benefits from food being donated instead of thrown away. Besides impacting natural resources, food waste dominates municipal landfills and emits methane, a greenhouse gas.

Harckham has held five food drives in the past few weeks—one each in Sleepy Hollow, Peekskill, Mount Kisco, Mohegan Lake and Brewster—and collected about 30,000 pounds of food items and over \$9,500 in cash donations so far. Hundreds of residents from the 40th Senate District have volunteered to help at the food drives as well—“a real grassroots show of support,” said Harckham.

Sen. Harckham spoke in support of the Excess Food Act from the Senate floor prior to his vote, and a video of his remarks is posted on his Senate website.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2019-S4176A**

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Requires supermarkets to make excess food available to qualifying entities

March 04, 2019

Senate Floor Calendar

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Do you support this bill?