

## Vote to End Hunger Candidate Survey

# David Chiu



Running For:  
**Assemblymember, District 17  
(re-election)**

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**COVID-19 has caused a rapid and historic spike in food insecurity, especially among communities of color. If elected, what will you do to increase economic opportunity and food access for our hardest-hit communities?**

Food deserts have existed in our City since before the COVID-19 pandemic, and both the public health and economic crises of 2020 have greatly exacerbated their impacts. Both before and during this pandemic and recession, I have supported increased investments to address food insecurity, particularly to invest in organizations that are already embedded in communities and can work to deliver exactly what their community needs. Most immediately, as Assemblymember, I have volunteered personally and encouraged San Franciscans to volunteer at food banks -- such as the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank -- so they have the manpower to meet the urgent needs of the community.

**San Francisco ranks 46th of 58 counties in enrolling eligible people in the CalFresh program. If elected, what actions will you take to improve CalFresh program access and utilization?**

It's critical we both increase funding for CalFresh, and make it easier for San Franciscans to access its services. There have been many efforts in recent years to do just that via legislation, but we clearly have much further to go. We also must invest in outreach programs so that communities know how to get enrolled in CalFresh, and can navigate the process successfully.

**Food insecurity is a major contributor to poor health and higher healthcare costs. What steps or legislative actions would you take to ensure that food insecure people with diet-related diseases have access to nutritious food?**

Food insecurity is a critical symptom of a larger issue we face in San Francisco, exacerbated by our housing crisis and the overarching issue of our profound wealth gap. Beyond investing in CalFresh to make its program more robust and accessible, and investing in community-specific programs to increase access to food, we must think holistically. That's why in 2017, I authored AB 415, which was signed into law to ensure CalFresh recipients have access to job training programs that combat financial insecurity -- as food and financial insecurity are intertwined. It's also critical we invest in community health programs -- now more than ever -- to meet the wide range of health needs. These services can and should be united, to meet the immediate and long-term health needs of San Franciscans.

**In SF and Marin, 1 in 5 people experience food insecurity. What other steps or legislative actions would you take to address poverty and hunger in your community?**

The 1 in 5 statistic is absolutely unacceptable in one of the wealthiest regions in one of the wealthiest states in the country. As I said above, poverty, hunger, and homelessness are fundamentally intertwined, and we cannot address one critical issue without addressing them all. As Chair of the Assembly Housing & Community Development Committee, I have fought to tackle our affordable housing crisis, and just last year, I authored the nation's most progressive tenant protection bill, which protects millions of renters from unjust evictions and rent-gouging. During COVID-19, I have led the charge to protect tenants from evictions simply because they have been economically devastated by the pandemic. Ensuring San Franciscans keep a roof over their heads is a critical component of improving health outcomes in our City.