

## 1 SENATE BILL NO. 97

## 2 AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

3 (Proposed by the Senate Committee on Education and Health

4 on January 22, 2026)

5 (Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Roem)

6 *A BILL to amend and reenact § 23.1-409.2 of the Code of Virginia, relating to institutions of higher*  
7 *education; Hunger-Free Campus Food Pantry Grant Program; establishment of student meal plan credit*  
8 *donation program.*9 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**10 **1. That § 23.1-409.2 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**11 **§ 23.1-409.2. Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program; "Hunger-Free Campus" designation.**12 A. As used in this section, "eligible private institution of higher education" means a nonprofit private  
13 institution of higher education whose primary purpose is to provide collegiate, graduate, or professional  
14 education and not to provide religious training or theological education.15 B. The Hunger-Free Campus ~~Food Pantry~~ Grant Program (the Program) is established for the purposes of16 (i) addressing student food insecurity at public institutions of higher education and eligible private institutions  
17 of higher education; (ii) leveraging more sustainable solutions to address basic food needs on campuses of  
18 public institutions of higher education and eligible private institutions of higher education; (iii) raising  
19 awareness of services offered on campuses at public institutions of higher education and eligible private  
20 institutions of higher education to address food insecurity; and (iv) building strategic partnerships at the  
21 federal, state, and local levels to address food insecurity among students at public institutions of higher  
22 education. The Program shall be managed by the Council and available for participation by public institutions  
23 of higher education; however, participation in the Program shall be optional for such institutions. The Council  
24 shall review applications from such institutions, and if an institution satisfies the criteria set out in subsection  
25 C, it shall receive a "Hunger-Free Campus ~~Food Pantry~~" designation and the Council shall award a grant to  
26 such institution. The Council shall prioritize grants and grant amounts to institutions with the highest  
27 percentage of students eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant enrolled in such institution. The Program shall  
28 be funded as grants are appropriated. An institution that receives a grant pursuant to this section shall utilize  
29 the funds to support on-campus efforts and initiatives to eliminate student food insecurity at such institution  
30 through the maintenance and operation of its food pantry *and, if applicable, student meal credit sharing*  
31 *program* established pursuant to subsection C.

32        C. To receive a "Hunger-Free Campus ~~Food Pantry~~" designation and receive funding under the Program,  
33        a public institution of higher education or an eligible private institution of higher education shall establish ~~an~~:

34            1. *An on-campus food pantry or partner with a local food bank to provide information to students about*  
35        *food services in the local area. All food provided from the on-campus food pantry shall be free of charge, and*  
36        *no student shall be required to demonstrate food insecurity to access such pantry. However, an institution*  
37        *may require that an individual show a valid student identification card to access food from the on-campus*  
38        *food pantry; and*

39            2. *If such institution offers a meal swipe program or equivalent student meal swipe plan, a student meal*  
40        *credit sharing program, whereby students may voluntarily donate unused meal plan credits to be distributed*  
41        *for use by other students at campus dining halls or at its on-campus food pantry, or to be used to support its*  
42        *on-campus food pantry. Each institution shall develop procedures for such meal plan credit donation*  
43        *program, including procedures for how a student may donate his unused meal plan credits and how a student*  
44        *in need can apply to receive any donated meal plan credits.*