

TO: House Committee on Business and Labor
FROM: Leann Knapp, Oregon Food Bank
RE: **Support HB 2009 to Fight the Housing & Hunger Crisis**
DATE: March 2, 2021



Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 1 in 11 Oregonians were food insecure. **In 2020, one in four Oregonians faced hunger**— a dramatic increase driven by the public health and economic fallout of COVID-19. These increases make it more important than ever that this Legislative Session we pass policies that will support our communities in emerging stronger from this crisis.

Oregon's foreclosure moratorium has ended, and since then too many families have had to face COVID-prompted disruptions as they wonder whether they will be able to stay in their homes. At the end of 2020, approximately **111,000 Oregonians said they were behind on their mortgage payments**, and 82,000 said they lacked confidence they could make January's mortgage payment.¹

The link between hunger and housing is clear. More recent studies have found that the 2008 foreclosure crisis was partially responsible for a 35% increase in the number of households facing food insecurity.² When individuals lose their homes, they are often thrown into a cycle of destabilization that becomes increasingly difficult to escape- and it often includes hunger. This is especially true for Oregonians of color who already experience disproportionate rates of hunger, poverty, illness and job loss for generations due to persistent economic and racial inequities.

One of the best things we can do right now to prevent hunger is to keep Oregonians in their homes. That is why Oregon Food Bank is proud to support House Bill 2009- because it will prevent a new wave of displacement and homelessness as we move toward one full year engulfed in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oregon Food Bank urges your support for House Bill 2009 in order to extend Oregon's foreclosure moratorium and prevent further homelessness and hunger. With the clock ticking and as the need for further relief grows, our shared values call upon us to care for one another, especially the most vulnerable.

¹ <https://www.streetroots.org/news/2021/01/27/lenders-poised-pounce-homeowners-fighting-foreclosure>
² <https://appam.confex.com/appam/2017/webprogram/Paper23282.html>

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