

Submitter: Halle Riddlebarger

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2728

Chair Reynolds & members of the committee, for the record, my name is Halle Riddlebarger and I am the Outreach Manager and an owner of Medford Food Co-op.

I am requesting your support for HB 2728.

HB 2728 supports the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon, a SNAP matching program with a proven record of success.

These past few years have been challenging for community members navigating food insecurity. Last year, over 45,000 Jackson County residents received food assistance from our Regional Food Bank – that's 1 in 5 residents.

Double Up Food Bucks supports community members struggling to afford food and invests in local farmers and economies. It also allows SNAP shoppers to purchase more fruits and vegetables and stretches grocery budgets for those who need it most. The cost of fresh produce is often listed as a primary challenge for food insecure households. Medford Food Co-op is grateful for the opportunity to expand access to healthy food through the Double Up model. Our community-owned natural foods store currently has about 900 residents enrolled in Double Up Food Bucks, like Laura Lindley-Gutierrez of Medford, who shared her experience with the following statement:

“The Double Up Food Bucks Program is such a gift to my family. I am a working single mother of four children and sometimes the easiest place to skimp and save is on healthy and nutritious food. However, with the DUFB program, I know that fruits and vegetables are always readily available for myself and my children. Thanks to the program, we eat a wider variety of fruits and vegetables that would otherwise be cost prohibitive. Sometimes, at the end of the month, before payday, we are literally out of money, but I can go into the Medford Coop and at least get fruits and veggies to tide us over, thanks to the DUFB program. I am so grateful from the bottom of my heart.”

Passing HB 2728 would mean more Oregonians would have access to fruits and vegetables – like Laura and her family. It means more grocery stores, farmers markets, and CSAs across the state can participate. I urge your support for HB 2728.