



Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Umpqua Valley Farm to School, I am writing to express **support for Senate Bill 610, Food For All Oregonians** which would ensure all of our neighbors, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

Hunger was a crisis in our communities well before the pandemic, and the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have fallen hardest on newly-arrived Oregonians. Immigrants, refugees and Compact of Free Association (COFA) community members, in particular, have long faced higher rates of hunger and poverty in Oregon. Just one example: Latinx and Pacific Islander Oregonians experienced hunger at twice the rate of white Oregonians pre-pandemic¹ – and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living.

At Umpqua Valley Farm to School, we teach primarily low-income kids and families how to make healthy decisions about what they eat and how they live. The success of our efforts is largely dependent on their ability to access food at home, regardless of where they were born. We need systemic change to address racial and economic disparities in our food system so that every child has the nourishment they need to learn and thrive.

At Umpqua Valley Farm to School, we know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. SB 610 will allow kids to do better in school, our families' health and well-being improves, and our economy thrives through the support of local farms and businesses. This will be true in every corner of Oregon—in rural, urban, and suburban communities alike. When all of our neighbors are getting the food that they need, all of Oregon thrives.

This is why we urge your yes vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Erin Maidlow
Executive Director | Umpqua Valley Farm to School

¹ https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_at_arrival_of_covid_2018-2020.pdf