

RE: Support Food for All, SB 610

February 24th, 2023



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

On behalf of Next Up Action Fund, 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-pandemic — and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living.

As an organization that builds political power with young people, we know that it is imperative that basic needs are met first and foremost. Direct support for individuals and families made a difference throughout the pandemic, and we need action on that same scale to keep hunger in our communities from worsening. According to a report on Food Insecurity in the Oregon more than 300,000 kids, or one in seven children (14.6 percent), in Oregon are food insecure.¹

At Next Up Action Fund, 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 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,

Isabela Villarreal, she/her
Policy and Communications Director

¹<https://oregonhunger.org/school-meals/#:~:text=Hunger%20remains%20persistently%20high%20for,of%20adequate%20nutrition%20on%20kids>.