



February 27, 2023

RE: SB610 – Food For All Oregonians
Senate Committee on Human Services

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

My name is Cayle Tern and I am the Immigrant Program Manager at APANO. APANO envisions a just world where Asians and Pacific Islanders and communities who share our aspirations and struggles have the power, resources, and voice to determine our own futures. As a member of the Food for All Oregonians Steering Committee, APANO was able to incorporate this vision to Senate Bill 610 and address food insecurities that plague our communities. We support this bill because we support the self-sufficiency of all Oregonians.

As housing and other living expenses increase, more and more Oregonians become priced out of healthy and nutritious meals that keep them healthy and working. Food For All Oregonians makes food assistance available to all Oregonians who are currently excluded due to immigration status and provides families with money for groceries that match federal SNAP food assistance benefits till they can return to being self-sufficient.

We have a vibrant immigrant community in Oregon. However, the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 exposed some grave inequities. For example, the pandemic exposed that our Latinx and Pacific Islander Oregonians experienced hunger at twice the rate of white Oregonians pre-pandemic¹. In addition, nearly 50% of Pacific Islanders are low-income, and 23% are in poverty, the highest rate in Oregon.

According to Ensuring the health and well-being of families in Oregon also supports the economic health of Oregon. In a 2007 study, the Asian and Pacific Islanders population alone owned over 13,500 businesses in Oregon, an increase of 40% since 2002, employing more than 27,000 people with \$535 million in annual payroll. In order to sustain this level of growth we need to ensure that these families have help when they need it².

We know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. Kids do better in school, our families' health and well-being improves, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This is 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 I am urging your yes vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Cayle Tern

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

²chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.advancingjustice-aaic.org/sites/default/files/2016-09/AAAJ_Western_Dem_2015.pdf