

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

On behalf of APANO CUF and APANO, 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.

For the state of Oregon to thrive, all Oregonians must thrive – and that requires being housed and fed. Food is such a crucial component of one’s identity across cultures; it brings us together and nourishes our bodies. The act of being in community, sharing foods that are familiar and comforting, can also nourish our souls. The lack thereof, not knowing where our next meal is coming from, can be detrimental in so many ways.

At APANO CUF and APANO, 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, improve our families’ health and well-being, and ensure our economy will thrive with additional 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.

With this, we urge your “yes” vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Ashley Mumm

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