

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

My name is Jennifer Gregorich and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am writing in support of 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.

I work for a business that financially supports organizations creating greater food access in our communities. As a result, I have a bird-eye view of the effects of hunger on Oregonians, the shortcomings of our current policies addressing food access, and how nonprofits are working tirelessly to fill the gaps to keep people fed. Food is a human right for all peoples. Hunger was a crisis in our communities 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. This gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living.

Food for All Oregonians will create a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP and make applying for assistance more welcoming. Food For All Oregonians makes food assistance available to all Oregonians who are currently excluded due to immigration status and it provides families with money for groceries that matches federal SNAP food assistance benefits.

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,
Jennifer Gregorich