



## Oregon moms and caregivers fighting for gender, economic, and racial justice.

To: Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health, and Recovery  
From: Family Forward Oregon  
Date: February 27, 2023  
RE: In Support of SB 610 - Food for All Oregonians

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, members of the committee:

I am writing, on behalf of Family Forward Oregon, to express support for Senate Bill 610. Family Forward Oregon is a statewide organization that is committed to passing policies that support economic justice for mothers, caregivers, and families. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 610, Food For All Oregonians. Food For All Oregonians 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<sup>1</sup> — and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living.

Mothers and caregivers have been suffering economically long before the pandemic and in particular feel the impact of food insecurity. According to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, household food insecurity is particularly high for households with children (12.5 percent) and those headed by a single mother (24.3 percent).<sup>2</sup> And currently one in three child care providers experience food insecurity due to poverty wages.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, experiencing food insecurity during pregnancy has been found to lead to health issues such as disordered eating, chronic disease, and pregnancy complications.<sup>4</sup> These challenges for food insecure mothers are only exacerbated when a family is unable to access food benefits due to their immigration status.

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[https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon\\_food\\_insecurity\\_rates\\_at\\_arrival\\_of\\_covid\\_2018-2020.pdf](https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_at_arrival_of_covid_2018-2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/key-statistics-graphics/>

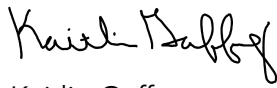
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ffyf.org/1-in-3-child-care-workers-is-experiencing-food-insecurity/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9227310/>

At Family Forward Oregon, we believe that all mothers, caregivers, and families deserve economic security and food security, regardless of their immigration status. 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 for your time.

Sincerely,



Kaitlin Gaffney  
Policy and Campaigns Manager  
Family Forward Oregon

