

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

My name is Mackenzie Aime and I live in Eugene, Oregon. I am writing today to ask for your support on Senate Bill 610, Food for All Oregonians. This bill ensures all of our neighbors, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

SB 610 is good for Oregon. I have seen firsthand the importance of SNAP in keeping our communities fed and supporting overall well-being. My family has been supported by SNAP and I think that it is essential that all members of our community, from every corner of Oregon be able to access this essential program, regardless of where someone is born. Everyone deserves food and I think this bill will move us closer to ending hunger and food insecurity. We know that hunger was a crisis in our communities before the pandemic, and the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have fallen hardest on our immigrant and refugee neighbors. Immigrants, refugees and Compact of Free Association (COFA) community members, in particular, have long faced higher rates of hunger and poverty in Oregon. This is shown in the fact that 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-19'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. We can and must support the passage of this program to make food assistance available to all Oregonians who are currently excluded from SNAP due to immigration status. I am also excited that in addition to stopping exclusions, this bill also supports community navigation and outreach, language access and focuses on building trust and community safety.

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.

**I urge you to support SB 610 and vote yes to move this bill forward.**

Thank you,

Mackenzie Aime