



February 27, 2023

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
FROM: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda
RE: Support for SB 610

Dear Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Robinson, and Members of the Committee,

The Children's Agenda, convened by Our Children Oregon, brings together ~127 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the well-being of Oregon's children, youth, and families. Our collective created a 2023 legislative agenda that focuses on community-driven solutions to provide access and opportunities for all children and families. **We write in support of SB 610: Food for All Oregonians, which is a top priority of the 2023 Children's Agenda.**

Food insecurity is referred to as a lack of available financial resources for food at a household level.¹ According to OCO's Oregon KIDS COUNT Data Cards, 15.4% of children are experiencing food insecurity, which is about 132,500 kids in Oregon.² Furthermore, Lincoln County has the highest number of children (24.4%) who are experiencing child food insecurity in Oregon, followed by Coos (23.6%) and Grant (23.4%) counties. In 2020, the Oregon State University School of Public Policy reported that Latinx, Black, Native American, and Pacific Islanders are two to three times more likely to experience food insecurity than white Oregonians.³

Oregon has diligently worked to expand access to health care, coverage, and other basic rights for immigrants, refugees, and Compacts of Free Association (COFA) community members. However, these communities continue to face higher rates of hunger and poverty, causing downfalls in long-term health and overall well-being. Currently, there are ~62,000 Oregonians who are excluded from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) due to immigration status or where they were born.

SB 610 will create a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP and make applying for assistance more welcoming. All Oregonians should have the potential to attain proper nutrition regardless of immigration status. **The Children's Agenda strongly supports SB 610:**

¹ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/food-insecurity>

² <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

³ https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_at_arrival_of_covid_2018-2020.pdf

- Provide aid for the purchase of food by residents of Oregon
- Create one seamless application process for federally-funded and state-funded nutrition assistance
- Maximize enrollment and retention of eligible individuals
- Provide funding to organizations and community-based groups to deliver culturally specific and targeted outreach

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.

We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge you to support of SB 610.

Sincerely,

Our Children Oregon
 APANO
 American Heart Association
 Catholic Community Services
 Children's Institute
 Clackamas Women's Services
 Coalition of Communities of Color
 FACT Oregon
 Family Forward Oregon
 Friends of Outdoor School
 IRCO
 Neighborhood Partnerships
 Oregon Alliance of YMCAs
 Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries
 Oregon AG's Sexual Assault Task Force
 Oregon CASA Network

Oregon Education Association
 Oregon Food Bank
 Oregon Center for Public Policy
 Oregon Hunger Task Force
 Oregon Kids Read
 Oregon Law Center
 Oregon Nurse Association
 Oregon Primary Care Association
 Oregon PTA
 Oregon Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
 Oregon Resource Family Alliance
 Oregon School-Based Health Alliance
 Prevent Child Abuse Oregon
 Pro-Choice Oregon
 Reach Out and Read Northwest
 Washington County Kids

[View the 2023 Children's Agenda: www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda/](http://www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda/)