



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,

My name is Greer Klepacki, and I am here today on behalf of Our Children Oregon. We are a statewide organization that advances equitable policies, data and research, and whole-child advocacy. I also represent OCO's Children's Agenda, which brings together ~127 organizations to create a 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.

**I am here today in support of SB 610: Food for All Oregonians, which is a top priority of the 2023 Children's Agenda.** According to OCO's KIDS COUNT Data Cards, 15.4% of children are experiencing food insecurity, which is about 132,500 kids in Oregon.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Lincoln County is the county with the highest number of children in Oregon, (24.4%), who are experiencing child food insecurity, followed by Coos (23.6%) and Grant (23.4%) Counties. Latinx, Black, Native American, and Pacific Islanders are two to three times more likely to experience food insecurity than white Oregonians.<sup>2</sup>

Food insecurity is something that I am unfortunately all too familiar with. I can recall many times in my family of four kids all within 10 years of each other that the only snacks in our cupboard were tortilla chips, as they were an inexpensive snack that my family could afford. This was also because we lived in a food desert, which is a neighborhood without a grocery store. This caused my family to have to rely on food trips to Chevron and other convenience stores that only offer pre-packaged and non-nutritionally dense foods. In fact, sometimes, the only way we had access to fresh and nutritional food options was by taking trips to churches on weekends to access free food pantries, and having to rely on that food between food stamp payments. I became an advocate for children so that other families didn't have to grow up struggling like I did for basic human rights like food.

In closing, it is apparent that food and benefit access are inadequate and inequitable in the state

<sup>1</sup> <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

<sup>2</sup> [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)

of Oregon. Investments in expanding access to food assistance, such as SB 610, will help to combat food insecurity and make available the proper food resources for all Oregonians.

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

Sincerely,

Greer Klepacki, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator

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