

February 27, 2023

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

Dear Chair Gelser-Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 610. My name is Sharon, and I currently live in Multnomah County.

I'm writing to support SB 610: Food for All Oregonians, a top 2023 Children's Agenda priority. Oregon has diligently worked to expand access for immigrants and refugees to health care, coverage, and other basic rights. However, many communities do not have access to food assistance programs due to the exclusion of immigration status and face downfalls in long-term health and well-being. SB 610 provides a substantial amount of things that would positively affect all communities with access to food. All Oregonians should be able to attain proper nutrition regardless of immigration status.

SB 610 will 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 and provide funding to organizations and community-based groups to deliver culturally specific and targeted outreach. Food and benefit access are inadequate for immigrants and Oregonians alike. Assistance and security play a vital role throughout every community in Oregon.

As a past school board member in Clackamas County, ensuring our students had adequate food resources was a constant and costly effort. For any child to grow up and reach their potential basic needs such as access to food is critical. We want to see all children thrive but school districts alone can not be expected to manage all food demands families may have regardless of our best efforts (partnerships with faith communities, local food bank access and/or backpack weekend food deliveries). Individuals and organizations working on behalf of kids need equitable access to food across settings and communities.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my concern.

Warmly,
Sharon Soliday Rolin