

SUBJECT:
Yes on SB 610

BODY:
Chairs Steiner and Sanchez; Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg and Smith; Members of the Committee:

My name is Migdalia Castaneyra and I live in Beaverton. Today I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 610**, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure all of our neighbors, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

I support this bill because it is unjust that people don't have access to a basic necessity like food due to their documented status. I personally haven't used SNAP or food stamps, but I've been part of other programs that provided some free food to students and community members around Portland State University, and this experience solidified my belief that food is a human right.

Hunger was a crisis in our communities 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-pandemic¹ – and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID'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 makes applying for assistance more welcoming. Food For All Oregonians also makes food assistance available to all Oregonians who are currently excluded due to immigration status, because someone's immigration status shouldn't be the reason that they and their families experience hunger.

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.

This is why I am urging your yes vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Migdalia Castaneyra

¹https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_at_arrival_of_covid_2018-2020.pdf