



February 5th, 2024

To: Senate Human Services Committee
From: Partners For a Hunger-Free Oregon
RE: Support for SB 1585

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for SB 1585, Equal Access to Hot Foods. My name is Angelita Morillo and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Partners For a Hunger-Free Oregon (PHFO). PHFO is a statewide anti-poverty advocacy organization with a small staff of under 15 members. We understand that leadership comes from those with lived experience and that hunger and poverty do not exist on their own, but are the result of failing economic systems that require the exploitation of certain groups of people in order to continue. The result of this is overlapping systems of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism, and other forms of violence. Our values and work are centered in creating systemic changes to end hunger. At Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon, we do not seek to just feed our neighbors, we seek our shared liberation from systems of oppression. We believe every Oregonian deserves to feel safe and be treated with dignity, and that includes abundant access to culturally relevant foods.

You'll receive many statistics and studies on why being able to purchase hot foods with SNAP dollars is absolutely critical to addressing hunger, so instead I want to share a personal story. I was homeless through part of college, and I eventually received housing for one year by becoming a Residential Advisor at my school. As RAs we received free housing and a free meal plan, but during our three week Winter Break, the cafeteria closed. There was no communal kitchen, our dorms did not have microwaves, and we were not allowed to use hot plates to cook due to fire risk. The assumption in these policy decisions was that everyone had a safe home to return to during school breaks, and that they would be fed by their families there. For those of us who had to remain on campus, there were no places to cook food even if we were to go to the food pantry (which many of us didn't know existed, nor did we know how to access the food pantry).



For those three weeks, without even access to a microwave to heat up a packet of ramen, I subsisted off of power bars and poptarts. I kept working, I kept doing my unpaid internship, and I stayed up most nights despite how tired I was because my stomach ached with hunger. If I had known that I could access SNAP, purchasing hot foods would have been the only way for me to have nutritious meals for about a month. No person should be in that position, let alone a student trying to make a better life for themselves.

The [latest data](#) shows that 463,000 Oregonians are facing food insecurity, and that 178,000 Oregonians are dealing with hunger. Single mothers face the highest levels of food insecurity, followed by Native, Latino, and Black Oregonians. Access to hot foods is also crucial for elderly and disabled community members who are unable to cook meals for themselves. The ability to purchase hot foods will give Oregonians the dignity and independence we deserve, while also granting access to groups that are largely ignored or left out of discussions on the systemic barriers within SNAP. Please support SB 1585, Equal Access to Hot Foods.

Sincerely,

Angelita Morillo
Partners For a Hunger-Free Oregon
SNAP Policy Advocate