

Submitter: Devon Lawson-McCourt
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure: SB1585

Dear Members of the Senate Committee On Human Services,

I am writing to you today as a staunch advocate for social justice and economic equality, to express my wholehearted support for Senate Bill 1585. This groundbreaking piece of legislation represents a significant step forward in our collective mission to dismantle the barriers of inequality and ensure that every individual, regardless of their economic standing, has access to the basic necessities of life—most fundamentally, nutritious and quality food.

SB 1585 is not merely a legislative proposal; it is a clarion call for compassion and a move towards a more inclusive society. By requiring the Department of Human Services to establish a work group to explore the feasibility of allowing recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase hot foods and prepared meals, this bill acknowledges a simple truth: access to a variety of nutritious foods is a right, not a privilege.

The current restrictions on SNAP benefits, which prevent the purchase of hot, prepared foods, disproportionately impact the most vulnerable members of our community—the homeless, individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and those without the means or facilities to prepare their own meals. By lifting these restrictions, SB 1585 addresses a critical gap in our social safety net, ensuring that all individuals have the flexibility and dignity to obtain meals that are not only nourishing but also align with their specific needs and circumstances.

Moreover, the implementation of this program, whether on a statewide basis or as a pilot, will stimulate our local economy by increasing patronage to local restaurants and food service businesses, many of which have struggled in the wake of economic challenges. This initiative not only supports those in need but also provides a much-needed boost to small businesses within our community.

The inclusion of a diverse work group to analyze options and oversee the implementation of this program ensures that the policy is crafted with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and needs faced by SNAP recipients. This collaborative approach guarantees that the program is not a top-down solution but one built on the principles of community engagement and inclusivity.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 1585 embodies the values of empathy, equity, and

economic solidarity. It is a testament to Oregon's commitment to ensuring that every resident, regardless of their economic status, has access to the resources they need to thrive. I urge you to support this bill, not only as a policy that addresses a tangible need but as a symbol of our shared commitment to building a more equitable and compassionate society.

Sincerely,
Devon Lawson-McCourt