



Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the committee:

My name is Cynthia Branger Muñoz, and I represent the Oregon Education Association. We represent over 41,000 educators and education support professionals in Oregon. Our members include classroom teachers, school nurses, occupational therapists, counselors, and support staff.

OEA is in support of HB3435—a vital measure designed to combat food insecurity, which too often undermines our students' ability to learn and succeed. Every day in our classrooms, educators witness the harsh reality that when students are hungry, their focus wanes, their attendance suffers, and their academic performance is compromised. Chronic absenteeism, a significant challenge in Oregon, is frequently linked to food insecurity; when children lack reliable access to nutritious meals, they are more likely to miss school, further widening the gap in educational outcomes.

HB3435 sets forth clear guidelines and funding mechanisms to ensure that every student, regardless of background, has reliable access to nutritious meals. By streamlining the processes through which local educational agencies identify and support students in need, this bill addresses the immediate impact of hunger and paves the way for long-term academic success and well-being.

As education professionals, we are dedicated to nurturing an environment where every child can thrive. Supporting HB3435 is an investment in our students' futures—it is a commitment to creating classrooms where children can concentrate on learning instead of worrying about their next meal. This measure is a crucial step toward building a more equitable and supportive educational system for all Oregonians.

I respectfully urge you to support HB3435. Thank you for your time and for your steadfast commitment to the well-being of our children and the future of our state.