

Submitter: Chase Van Langen  
On Behalf Of: Alejandra Gurrola  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

On behalf of Familias en Acción, I am writing to express support for 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. Hunger was a crisis in our communities well before the pandemic, and the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have fallen hardest on newly-arrived Oregonians. Community members 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-pandemic — and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living. Food is critical for our well being and is a huge need in our Latiné communities. Due to structural racism and a lack of opportunity in the communities that need it most, food insecurity is linked to high levels of toxic stress, and it limits the capacity vulnerable communities of color have to meet their basic needs. Hungry adults and children have higher rates of mental health issues like depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome and are at higher risk of having chronic diseases. Food is a human right and many Oregonians go hungry or worry about where the next meal will come from due to eligibility, stigma, and misinformation associated with that eligibility. We must take bold steps now to address hunger in Oregon. At Familias en Acción, we know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. Food for All Oregonians will allow kids to do better in school; our families' health and well-being will improve, and our economy will thrive when our communities are healthy and able to contribute back. This will be 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.