

Submitter: John Laurence
On Behalf Of: St Andrews SVDP
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

I represent a small, shopping-style food pantry, St Andrew SVDP in Portland, Oregon. Our pantry is open 12 hours per week. Everyone associated with the operation of our pantry is a volunteer. Our clients are our neighbors. Our demographic distribution ranges from infants to elderly, every race, and several immigrant populations, primarily from NE Portland. We rely on food we receive from Oregon Food Bank as well as supplemental food we purchase through the generosity of St. Andrew parishioners. The need for food at our pantry has increased dramatically, particularly since supplemental benefits associated with the COVID-19 pandemic ended. For instance, in 2023, we served 4,629 households that included 17,177 individuals. In 2024, that increased to 7,547 households and 28,565 individuals, a 63 and 67% increase respectively. In 2023, we distributed about 175,000 pounds of food we received from OFB. In 2024, that increased to over 254,000 pounds as we tried to keep up with demand. In the first 2 months of 2025, we are on track to meet or exceed the demand we experienced in 2024. We receive our delivery from OFB on Monday. On Wednesday, our shelves are stocked and our storeroom is full. By Friday afternoon, we can provide people with a few cans of beans and maybe some rice. It's hard to turn hungry people away. We support SB 611, Food for All Oregonians. It will help meet the critical need we see, particularly for young Oregonians and the elderly. State assistance will help our neighbors who currently are not eligible for federal benefits. Providing benefits to those who are ineligible will greatly increase their ability to feed themselves and their families, it will supplement what we are able to provide, and it will help us meet our goal of sending every client home with the food they need. Thank you