

Submitter: Sarah Brown
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611 Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee, My name is Sarah Brown and I live and farm in Molalla, OR. We employ 3 people on our farm and have two children who attend our local public school. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 611, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure Youth and Elderly Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy. I've committed my entire life to working within the food system to catalyze change towards regenerative systems. Much of my focus has been on the impacts to our environment and rural communities. What is more clear to me now than ever, is that we need to take care of the PEOPLE in these systems in order to achieve any of the other changes we hope to see. We cannot restore the environment if people are hungry. We cannot conserve natural resources if people are hungry. We cannot build our rural economies if people are hungry. We cannot expand food processing infrastructure if people are hungry. Why are the people who are foundational to our food production the hungriest? There is gross irony here. Despite paying billions in annual taxes in Oregon, immigrant Oregonians are twice as likely to face hunger and poverty in our state. Thousands of immigrant and refugee Oregonians are excluded from vital food assistance due to their immigration status. These are our neighbors, our family, our friends, the children our kids play with, our coworkers and their loved ones– the people who help make Oregon a beautiful place to live. Access to food should not depend on where we were born. I urge you to envision an Oregon where anyone who needs food can get it. We know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. Kids do better in school, our families' health and well-being improves, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This is 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. This is why I am urging your YES vote on SB 611. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Sarah Brown Molalla, OR