

Submitter: Mason Durfee  
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 Mason Durfee and I live in Portland, Oregon. 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. The reason I support Food for All is that everyone should have access to food regardless of their identity or background. It is unconscionable that anyone, particularly the most vulnerable members of our society, should go hungry in Oregon because of exclusions that are preventing them from accessing state resources. Our state is a place of agricultural abundance and diversity is the cornerstone of our strength. The time is now to enact common sense policies that will alleviate food and nutrition insecurity. At a time when we are facing unprecedented rates of hunger in our state, we need policies that ensure food for all. Oregon is facing a hunger crisis, and it is getting worse. Today, 1 in 6 children in Oregon don't have enough to eat, and one-third more Oregonians face hunger than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Food pantries across the state are confronting record-breaking levels of demand— the Oregon Food Bank has never seen this level of urgent need in its 40+ years of food banking. 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. Food for All Oregonians (SB 611) will allow low-income Youth and Elder Oregonians to access the grocery benefits they need to thrive. These are Youth and Elders who are currently excluded from SNAP solely due to immigration status. Food for All will build on successful, community-driven navigator models to ensure trust and community safety. This is why I am urging your YES vote on SB 611. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Mason Durfee  
Portland, Oregon