

Submitter: Carlos Soriano  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

Good Day Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee, My name is Carlos J. Soriano, and I am a resident of Klamath Falls, Oregon, where my family and I have lived for nearly seven years. My wife and I are homeowners, business owners, and proud members of this community. We have five children, four of whom attend public schools in Klamath Falls. We love this region and the people of Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 611, Food For All Oregonians. This bill ensures that all Oregonians—particularly children and the elderly—have access to the food they need to live healthy, dignified lives, regardless of immigration status. This issue is deeply personal to me. When I was six years old, my family immigrated from the Dominican Republic to the United States, settling in Union City, New Jersey. We arrived on a visitor's visa, but due to political and economic instability in our home country, my parents made the difficult decision to stay. We lived six people to a 400-square-foot apartment, alongside roaches and rats, with broken windows that left us shivering through long, cold nights. My father struggled to find stable work due to his immigration status, and my mother did her best to contribute by baking and selling cakes. We relied on religious food pantries to get by, but my mother often avoided seeking help due to the shame and stigma. We were ineligible for SNAP or other public assistance. One of my strongest memories from childhood is hunger. It kept me up at night, made me feel hopeless, and affected my ability to focus in school. I couldn't wait to get to school—not for the lessons, but for the chance to eat lunch. I struggled academically, unable to concentrate before lunchtime, and I often wondered why learning was so difficult for me. After 13 years in the U.S., my family finally obtained legal status. I was able to attend college, earn a degree in political science, and later complete a master's degree in public administration. During that time, my wife and I were raising our children while juggling work and school. As a permanent resident, I remained ineligible for SNAP, but my wife and children qualified. That assistance helped sustain our family while I completed my education and built a career dedicated to serving others. Knowing that my children had enough to eat gave me the motivation to push forward. I often wonder how my life might have been different if my family had access to food assistance when I was a child. Maybe I could have had better grades, pursued my dream of becoming a doctor, or learned English more quickly. Senate Bill 611 is not just about food—it's about opportunity. It's about ensuring that children can focus in school, that seniors can live with dignity, and that families don't have to choose between rent and groceries. This bill is an investment in Oregon's future. As an immigrant and a Latino, I know firsthand that people in our community don't look for handouts—but we do recognize when we are given a hand up. That support drives us to work harder and give back to the

communities we call home. Children don't see political lines or policy debates. They only know whether they have enough to eat. As a father of four growing kids, I see this every day. Now, as a U.S. citizen who has voted in every election since 2010, I am proud to support Senate Bill 611. It is good policy, the right policy, and a smart investment in the well-being of Oregonians. Thank you for your time and consideration. Carlos J. Soriano Klamath Falls, Oregon