

Submitter: Julia Wentzel
On Behalf Of: OFB Tillamook County Services
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services FROM: Oregon Food Bank - Tillamook County Services SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611 Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee, My name is Julia Wentzel and I'm the Regional Manager at Oregon Food Bank - Tillamook County Services. We are in strong support of Senate Bill 611, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure that Youth and Elderly Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy. As the manager of the food bank serving Tillamook County, I oversee a network of more than 30 partner agencies who provide direct assistance to food insecure families. All of our food pantries and meal sites are reporting unprecedented levels of demand. Though Oregon Food Bank is currently moving an all-time high volume of food out to these partner agencies, it is insufficient to meet the current level of need in our community. We are facing the most urgent food crisis we have encountered in decades. We will continue to do everything we can to take care of our community. But hunger can't be stopped through food banking alone. Grocery benefits like SNAP are a vital tool in the broader toolkit to end hunger. Right now, a huge portion of our population is denied access to SNAP because of 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, and to offer some relief to the food banking system which is currently being pushed to its limits. There is strong support for this bill across the state—many thousands of Oregonians have expressed their support through emails and postcards to lawmakers. We know you, our legislators, have the power to ensure that no child goes hungry. Currently, one in six children in Oregon don't have enough to eat; we cannot allow that to continue. We must pass this measure in the current legislative session. I urge you to vote YES on SB 611. Thank you for your time.