

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 Angela Chen and I live in Salem, Oregon. I'm a college student currently majoring in Psychology and Sociology at Willamette University. 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.

As a part of my undergraduate curriculum, I have been very fortunate to have worked with members of Marion Polk Food Share in a class and was introduced to organizing they do around food justice. As a part of our collaboration, I spent time interviewing members and researching what kind of challenges they deal with. They have shared with me about the difficulties their organization has faced in attempting to meet high demands for food, as food insecurity in Oregon has drastically increased in recent years. I can personally attest to how much workers at Marion Polk Food Share care about the work they're doing, but their efforts alone are not enough. Senate Bill 611 is one way to support food banks like Marion Polk in addressing our community's needs.

Today, **one-third more Oregonians** face hunger than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Oregon is facing a hunger crisis, and it is getting worse. In 2024 people in Oregon and Southwest Washington sought emergency food assistance **as many as 1.5 million times** and alongside the 800,000 people enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). 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. 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.**

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. This bill will help struggling immigrants, refugees, and families across our state. These are our neighbors, our family, our friends, our coworkers and their loved ones— the people who help make Oregon a beautiful place to live. We know that when

we all have access to food, we're all better off. 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,
Angela
Salem, Oregon