

March 18, 2025

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Ali King on behalf of Our Children Oregon's 2025 Children's Agenda

SUBJECT: Support for SB 611

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ali King and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for Our Children Oregon (OCO), a statewide organization that champions equitable policies and opportunities for every child by leveraging data and research. The Children's Agenda, convened annually by OCO, brings together more than 135 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the wellbeing of Oregon's children, youth, and families.

SB 611, Food For All Oregonians, is a **top priority** of the 2025 Children's Agenda and has strong and broad support from our partner organizations across Oregon.

As advocates for children and families in Oregon, we have seen firsthand that Oregon is facing a hunger crisis, and it is getting worse. Food insecurity is referred to as a lack of available financial resources for food at a household level.¹ In 2022, a statewide average of 17.3% of children in 2022 experienced food insecurity, which is approximately 149,000 kids in Oregon, and nearly 5 percentage points higher than in 2021 (12.4%).² Furthermore, in 2023, Coos

¹<https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/food-insecurity>
²<https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

County had the highest percentage of children (25.5%) experiencing child food insecurity in the state, followed by Sherman (24.4%) and Josephine (24.0%) counties. In 2020, Oregon State University's School of Public Policy reported that Latinx, Black, Native American, and Pacific Islanders are two to three times more likely to experience food insecurity than white Oregonians.³

Oregon has diligently worked to expand access to health care, coverage, and other basic rights for immigrants, refugees, and Compacts of Free Association (COFA) community members. However, these communities continue to face higher rates of hunger and poverty, causing downfalls in long-term health and overall well-being. Currently, there are ~62,000 Oregonians who are excluded from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) due to immigration status or where they were born, according to the Oregon Food Bank.

Now more than ever, it's crucial that we acknowledge our shared humanity and extend compassion and empathy to one another. All people deserve to eat. That shouldn't be a divisive issue.

We appreciate the work you do to support Oregon's children and families and **we strongly urge you to help make Oregon a state where anyone who needs food can get it. Please vote YES on SB 611, Food For All Oregonians.**

Sincerely,

Our Children Oregon
Oregon Food Bank
Beyond Toxics
Black Parent Initiative

³ https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_at_arrival_of_covid_2018-2020.pdf

Center for Childhood Safety and Wellbeing
Children's Institute
Housing Oregon
Latino Network
Next Up Action Fund
Nurse-Family Partnership
Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries
Oregon Association of Student Councils
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Environmental Council
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Housing Alliance
Oregon Primary Care Association
Oregon School Nurses' Association
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon
Reach Out and Read NW
Southern Oregon Success
Urban League of Portland
Washington County Kids

View the [2025 Children's Agenda](#)