

Submitter: Nina Gallo  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

My name is Nina Gallo. I am a student at Portland State University studying Criminology and Criminal Justice. I also live in Southeast Portland. I am here today to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 611 because I believe that food is a human right and everyone deserves equal access, regardless of income, age, or immigration status. As a student enrolled full-time and working part-time, I, like many other students, utilize our free food pantry and basic needs hub. According to the PSU Housing Insecurity Report, 53% of students attending Portland State are experiencing food insecurity, demonstrating how difficult accessing food can be. This need is even more serious for our undocumented and immigrant students, families, and community members.

The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy released a report last year that estimates that in 2022, undocumented immigrants paid close to \$1 billion in federal, state, and local taxes and yet, the social services that many undocumented immigrants are paying into, like social security, medicare, and SNAP, remain inaccessible. The Center for Migration Studies estimates that 45% of all US agricultural workers are undocumented, with Oregon being one of the top five states hosting this population. It is ironic that a state so dependent on undocumented immigrants to sustain one of its largest industries denies them access to the very food they cultivate. Senate Bill 611 would remove barriers by providing nutrition assistance to residents of this state who would qualify for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program regardless of their undocumented status.

In a time when our current administration is threatening to dismantle institutions and support for our immigrant community, it is imperative that the state of Oregon fight for those who are under attack. Access to food should not depend on where you were born. I urge you to envision an Oregon where anyone who needs food can get it. I urge you to vote YES on SB 611. Thank you for your time.