



To: Chair Gelser Blouin and all the members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: Support SB 611

Date: 3/24/2025

Latino Network was founded in 1996 by advocates for the needs of the growing Latinx community in Multnomah County. Since then, these grassroots beginnings have evolved into a continuum of services that support Latinx individuals, families, and communities. Our programs currently focus on education, advocacy & leadership, health & wellness, economic justice, youth empowerment & violence prevention, and arts & culture, engaging nearly 11,000 community members throughout Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties in the last year. We are the leading culturally-specific provider for Latinx youth, parent, and family services in the Portland area with the goal of serving the nearly 19% of Oregon's population who identify as Latinx or Hispanic.

Latino Network currently provides direct services to youth and families in Senate Districts 13-15 and 19-25 and House Districts 25, 26, 28, 29, 37, 40 and 42-50.

Our organization has developed a public policy agenda to focus our engagement on issues that live at the intersection of social determinants of health and access to food is critical to all phases of people's lives. Food impacts life from prenatal to end of life. Access to consistently healthy food impacts education, employment, social stability and mobility. The importance of nutrition in education and early learning cannot be understated. We can set up high-quality education and well-resourced child care centers, but that fails to address the other pivotal aspects of a child's ability to learn and succeed. We operate food pantries in coordination with our early learning and K-12 afterschool programs for this very reason.

For many low-income individuals, SNAP is vital for meeting basic nutritional needs and is therefore foundational to overall health and well-being. Children and elders are at greatest risk of malnutrition turning into more complex and even life threatening illnesses. We can and we should ensure these community members have regular access to food. Our community health workers routinely help households navigate access to food. SNAP lets us give people the power to access food directly from their local stores rather than needing to schedule and plan around pantry days and food giveaways.

Please support SB 611 and vote YES!