

Submitter: Jon Makler  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611  
TO: Senate Committee on Human Services  
FROM: Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611

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

My name is Jon Makler, Program Manager with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO). One of our six community ministries is the Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP). NEFP is the largest pantry in the Oregon Food Bank network and is located in Portland's Cully neighborhood (House District 45, Senate District 23). Every week we handle more than 50,000 pounds of food and serve more than 1,000 households.

The average family that comes to NEFP once per week obtains 50 pounds of food with a retail value of approximately \$250. That means that every month NEFP families are collectively saving \$1,000,000 on groceries that they can use to afford their housing, medicine, utilities and transportation. When we address food insecurity, we are addressing financial instability and when we do that, we move towards shared prosperity and justice.

Although food pantries are an important part of addressing food insecurity, they are far from the only solution. SNAP and similar programs serve an equally important role in food security and financial stability. Whereas the pantry has limited hours and limited supply, SNAP provides the opportunity for a family to shop when, where and how they choose.

EMO believes that all Oregonians deserve food security. SB 611 will decrease food insecurity by providing more families with resources to shop on their own.

EMO believes that all Oregonians deserve the dignity to choose their food as well as when and where they get it. SB 611 will increase dignity by providing more families the ability to shop at a local store when it is convenient for them.

EMO believes Food for All Oregonians deserves your support and your vote because when each Oregonian has the food they need, every Oregonian will live in a more just community.

Respectfully Submitted,

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