

Submitter: Audrey Farrimond
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Hello Co-chairs Lieber and Sanchez and members of the Ways and Means Committee.

My name is Audrey Farrimond, I am a student at Lincoln High School in Portland, and I am asking for your support for Food for All Oregonians and Senate Bill 611. I am the president of the Students for Housing Initiatives Club, which I created to combat stigma and to advocate for solutions that target the root causes of homelessness. And the truth is, the root of homelessness is often hunger. Not providing people with basic nutritional assistance in their time of need forces them to choose between putting food on the table for their families or paying their rent. The intrinsic link between hunger, homelessness, and addiction cannot be ignored, and I feel it everyday in my school and in my city.

I was volunteering with some members of the houseless community and I spoke to an Elder who had worked for the Guardian for many years and who needed food assistance but never received it. He ended up on the street and became addicted to methamphetamine after taking it to stay warm in the winter. The worst part of all was the way that he was treated by his family and community. He lost all contact with his daughters, who had essentially shunned him.

His story really resonated with me. It taught me that when we see other people around us, our friends, family, and community members struggling, we must lift them up. We cannot pretend that they don't exist. We cannot pretend that good, hard working Oregonians aren't being denied access to necessary and life-saving nutritional support simply because of the country they were born in. Supporting the most vulnerable members of our community, our youth and our elders, is an important step towards dismantling the systems that perpetuate poverty and homelessness in our country today.

It also sends an important message. That Oregon is committed to supporting all of its residents. That it is committed to feeding all of its children. Regardless of immigration status