

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

My name is Elizabeth Braatz and I am here today in support of Senate Bill 611. I am here today for my friends, my neighbors neighbors, my friends who have become my family, and our communities whose livelihoods will be changed when this bill is passed this legislative session.

The ignorant, repulsive, demeaning, and harmful language used against our immigrant and refugee communities will not stop what I believe to be true; the arc of this nation's moral universe will bend towards justice, it must. How ironic is it that the very hands that pick, pack, and distribute our food, are the very people who face higher rates of food insecurity? Immigrant and Refugee communities are twice as likely to face hunger in the State of Oregon, than white Oregonians. Right now 33 percent more Oregonians are facing hunger after the pandemic, with roughly 2 million Oregonians having to turn to emergency food assistance programs to simply get their basic needs met. Food For All Oregonians is already modeled after five other state programs that are already existing to help improve eligibility for immigrants and refugees. We have the opportunity to be a model to other States, and to show what it actually means to take care of its people.

Oregon is a place where people come because they know that for the most part, they are safe. Whether it is for civil rights protections, workers rights, sanctuary laws, or other various protections, many people from around this nation and around the world come to Oregon, because they know they will be safe. Oregon has been a pioneer for many different programs and systems, and it has continuously shown that 'she flies with her own wings.'

I urge all of you to vote yes for SB 611 this legislative session. Now is not the time to back down from the principles and fearlessness Oregon has shown, and will continue to show. There will come a day in history where future generations will learn and understand the true nature of the times we are in now. But Oregon and its legislators have the opportunity to either stand up and fight against an oligarchy, or kneel before billionaires that continue to steal the soul of this nation. I believe in the idea of America, and so do our immigrant and refugee communities - they are what make this nation so great. Please vote yes on SB 611. Thank you.