

To: Senate Committee on Human Services
Subject: Support for SB 611 – Food for All Oregonians

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

On behalf of **Centro Cultural of Washington County**, I am writing to express my strong support for **Senate Bill 611, Food for All Oregonians**, which would ensure that all Oregonians—regardless of immigration status—have access to the food they need to keep themselves and their families healthy.

Hunger has long been a crisis in our communities, disproportionately affecting **immigrants, refugees, and Compact of Free Association (COFA) community members**. These individuals face **higher rates of food insecurity and poverty**, with Latinx and Pacific Islander Oregonians experiencing hunger at **twice the rate** of white Oregonians. The rising cost of living has only **widened these disparities**, making it even more difficult for many to access basic necessities.

At **Centro Cultural**, we serve over **2,000 families each month** and witness firsthand the struggles of community members who face **barriers to food access**. **Food should not be a privilege—it is a fundamental human right**. The **Centro Mercado** plays a vital role in Washington County by providing culturally relevant food to a **diverse population**, ensuring that individuals and families have the nutrition they need.

We have also witnessed the struggle to access food assistance due to immigration status, leaving community members vulnerable and at risk. Additionally, **rising costs and inflation** have made it even harder for families to afford basic groceries, deepening the divide between those who can access food and those who cannot.

SB 610 will directly improve food access for thousands of Oregonians by ensuring that those who contribute to our communities, work hard, and support Oregon's economy **do not go hungry simply because of where they were born**. This bill will help children succeed in school, improve the health and well-being of families, and strengthen our local economy by supporting businesses across the state.

When all of our neighbors have access to food, **our entire state thrives**—from rural to urban communities alike. **For these reasons, I strongly urge your YES vote on SB 611**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Everardo Lopez Pizano
Food Program Manager
Centro Cultural of Washington County