

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
FROM: William Temple House
SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611

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

My name is Emily Sunderman, Social Services Program Coordinator at William Temple House. William Temple House is in **strong support of Senate Bill 611**, Food for All Oregonians which would ensure Youth and Elder Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

My organization supports Food for All Oregonians because organizations like ours were never intended to be the only defense against food insecurity, but for many immigrants, we are just that. Many immigrants must rely on food pantries like ours to fill the gap in their diets. During the three years I have been with this organization, our daily numbers have almost doubled. In March 2023, around 70 people visited our pantry daily and today, our daily average is 110 and growing. We are doing everything we can to meet the ever-growing need for food assistance in our community, but it is not enough.

No one should have to struggle to find their next meal, yet I hear from folks everyday who have not eaten in days. As a registered dietitian, I understand that access to food is linked to better health outcomes, better performance in school, and increased housing security. As a SNAP Outreach Partner, I have seen first-hand how many Oregonians are experiencing food insecurity but do not qualify for SNAP due to immigration status. How does one expect to live a healthy life, to contribute to our community, when they are consumed with hunger?

With SB 611, we would be creating the foundation to end food insecurity among immigrants and be one step closer to supporting those who contribute to making our state great! Please consider voting yes on SB 611.

Best,
Emily Sunderman