



Oregon Latino Health Coalition

Health and wellness through equity and justice

Dear Chair Blouin, Vice Chair Linthicum, Senators Nash, Prozanski, and Reynolds,

My name is Andrea Vanessa Castillo, and I am honored to be here today as the Policy and Advocacy Manager with the Oregon Latino Health Coalition and as a representative of the Food For All Steering Committee.

I have seen firsthand the impact of food insecurity on our communities. Growing up in Hillsboro, Oregon, I witnessed how socioeconomic disparities can limit access to nutritious food, and how and immigration status limits access to resources that could improve the overall wellbeing of people living here. Latine Oregonians have worked to overcome significant barriers to living healthy lives - from language barriers to accessing culturally specific services and finding available preventive care. These barriers, along with limited access to nutritious food, exacerbates health disparities causing obesity and diabetes - two examples of preventable diseases that have high rates within the Latine community.

I have worked with our Promotoras de Salud/Community Health Workers, who primarily support clients in enrolling to the Oregon Health Plan, but also supports navigating other assistance needed, such as access to culturally specific food pantries or programs like SNAP. However, we know that undocumented individuals often struggle to qualify for essential benefits like SNAP, highlighting the need for inclusive policies, like this one. Senate Bill 611 offers a crucial step towards addressing these disparities by ensuring that all Oregonians have access to nutritious food.

As a passionate advocate for community empowerment, I believe that having the autonomy to choose what we eat is fundamental. It's about cultural identity and family traditions, on top of sustenance. It's about something as simple as making caldo de pollo in the summer that can bring nostalgia and nourishment to our families.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 611. Let us continue Oregon's legacy of bold legislation- such as expanding health-insurance coverage to thousands of immigrant and refugee families. Together, we can ensure that everyone in Oregon has equitable opportunities for optimal health and fulfilling lives.

Thank you for your time,

Andrea Vanessa Castillo
Policy and Advocacy Manager