

Submitter: John M Reutter-Harrah  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611  
TO: Senate Committee on Human Services  
SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611

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

My name is John Reutter-Harrah and I am a pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Woodburn, and I am a member of the Sacred Organizing Coalition. I am writing 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.

Our church hosts a drive-through meal every Wednesday night, all year long, serving from 800-900 meals (1200 during Thanksgiving and Christmas). The need is great- I see the gratefulness of folks who have access to a healthy meal, even if for only one evening.

Despite paying billions in annual taxes in Oregon, immigrant Oregonians are twice as likely to face hunger and poverty in our state. Thousands of immigrant and refugee Oregonians are excluded from vital food assistance due to their immigration status. Probably 75% of the folks we serve on Wednesday evening are immigrants to our state.

These are our neighbors, our family, our friends, the children our kids play with, our coworkers and their loved ones– the people who help make Oregon a beautiful place to live. Access to food should not depend on where we were born. I urge you to envision an Oregon where anyone who needs food can get it.

Food for All Oregonians (SB 611) will allow low-income Youth and Elder Oregonians to access the grocery benefits they need to thrive. These are Youth and Elders who are currently excluded from SNAP solely due to immigration status. Food for All will build on successful, community-driven navigator models to ensure trust and community safety.

We know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. Kids do better in school (I see the kids in the back seats of these cars), our families' health and well-being improves, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This is true in every corner of Oregon—in rural, urban, and suburban communities

alike. When all of our neighbors are getting the food that they need, all of Oregon thrives.

This is why I am urging your YES vote on SB 611. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The Rev. John Reutter-Harrah, pastor in Woodburn, resident of West Linn