



TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
FROM: Oregon League of Conservation Voters
SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611

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

My name is Britney VanCitters, Political & Organizing Director at the Oregon League of Conservation Voters (OLCV). OLCV is in **strong support of Senate Bill 611**, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure Youth and Elderly Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

Five states, including Washington and California, have state programs that improve the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility for immigrants and refugees. Food for All is modeled after these programs and built with the expertise of Oregonians with lived experiences of hunger and our immigration system. This bill would help struggling immigrants, refugees, and families across our state. These are our neighbors, our family, our friends, our students, the children our kids play with, our coworkers and their loved ones– the people who help make Oregon a beautiful place to live.

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. We have farmworkers who are planting, growing, and harvesting the very foods that nourish all of us, and yet they cannot access these foods themselves or their families. 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 assistance is also a Homelessness Prevention tool, which helps keep our communities safe in the face of the climate crisis. A study of new SNAP participants found that after just 6 months of starting SNAP, households were more likely to become employed or keep their job. Our homes are our first line of defense during extreme weather, which is increasing due to climate change. By supporting upstream programs, Oregon can reduce harmful impacts on our communities

No one should have to choose between paying their bills or putting food on the table. I urge you to pass SB 611- Food for All Oregonians.

Thank you for accepting our testimony,
Britney VanCitters
Political & Organizing Director, OLCV