

TO: Joint Ways & Means Committee

SUBJECT: Yes on Food for All Oregonians (SB 611)

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Vanessa C and I live in Tillamook County. I'm a student and I am writing 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.

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.

Growing up I've seen my community suffer from lack of access to food as close loved ones , classmates and friends. I've seen first hand how this is affecting my community from a different perspective. As we don't talk about these problems as much as we should, a lot of people in my community are suffering from not having access to food as 1 to 6 children go hungry in Oregon right now as food for all has helped me and my community to be able to find support .

Oregon is facing a hunger crisis, and it is getting worse. Today, **1 in 6 children in Oregon** don't have enough to eat, and **one-third more Oregonians** face hunger than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Food pantries across the state are confronting **record-breaking levels of demand**– the Oregon Food Bank has never seen this level of urgent need in its 40+ years of food banking.

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.

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, 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,
Vanessa C
Tillamook County