

Submitter: Janet Orozco Ortiz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

My name is Janet and I live in Tillamook County, OR. I am writing to represent all of the excluded Oregonians, particularly those who face barriers to accessing vital resources due to immigration status. I am strongly in support of Senate Bill 611, Food For All Oregonians, and I want to share my personal story and why this bill is so important.

Growing up, I experienced food insecurity, and no child should have to go through that. Hunger is not just a physical feeling; it affects your ability to concentrate, feel safe, and succeed. I remember the anxiety of not knowing when or where my next meal would come from, and that experience has stayed with me. It's why I'm so passionate about ensuring that no one—especially children and elders—suffers from hunger.

Oregon is facing a hunger crisis, with 1 in 6 children not having enough to eat. One-third more Oregonians are dealing with hunger than before the pandemic. This is why SB 611 is critical—it would ensure that youth and elderly Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to stay healthy.

As a community health worker, I've seen firsthand how food insecurity contributes to long-term health issues, putting a strain on our healthcare system. When families lack access to nutritious food, they are at higher risk for chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and mental health struggles, which require ongoing medical care. This, in turn, increases healthcare costs and overwhelms our already strained system. Addressing hunger by ensuring access to healthy food helps reduce these health issues, leading to lower long-term healthcare expenses. It's an investment in both the health of individuals and the sustainability of our healthcare system.

Additionally, providing food for all Oregonians isn't just the morally right thing to do; it's also an investment in our economy. Every dollar spent on programs like SNAP generates at least \$1.50 in local economic activity, which helps strengthen our communities. SB 611 is a step toward ensuring no one in Oregon is left behind and that every person, regardless of immigration status, has the nourishment they need to thrive. I urge you to pass SB 611 and help end hunger for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Janet Orozco Ortiz