

Submitter: Guad OO

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

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

My name is Guad and I live in Tillamook. I am a mom of 4 kids. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 611, the Food for All Oregonians, which would ensure that Youth and Elder Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to stay healthy and thrive.

I have lived experience with food insecurity and understand what it's like to struggle to access nutritious meals. I also work closely with community members who face these same challenges. Many families I know, despite working long hours and contributing to Oregon's economy, are forced to make impossible choices between rent, medical bills, and food.

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 seeing 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. 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.

Farmworkers plant, grow, and harvest the very food that nourishes us, yet many cannot access these foods themselves or provide them for their families. This is unjust.

Senate Bill 611 will ensure that low-income Youth and Elder Oregonians, who are currently excluded from SNAP solely due to immigration status, can access the grocery benefits they need to thrive. The bill will build on successful, community-driven navigator models to ensure trust and safety.

We know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. Kids do better in

school, families' health and well-being improve, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This is true in every corner of Oregon.

When all of our neighbors have access to food, all of Oregon thrives. I urge you to pass SB 611.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Guad