

Submitter: R Farrell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

March 24, 2025

Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly,

I am an Oregon resident and taxpayer, here to oppose Senate Bill 611, which creates the "Food for All Oregonians Program." This program extends state-funded nutrition assistance to non-citizens ineligible for federal SNAP due to immigration status. While I understand its humanitarian intent, I believe it's fiscally irresponsible, risks abuse, and prioritizes non-citizens over Oregonians.

1. Fiscal Irresponsibility

Oregon's budget is already strained by rising costs in healthcare, education, and infrastructure. SB 611 commits to funding nutrition assistance for an unknown number of non-citizens, potentially costing millions annually. Benefits match SNAP levels—up to \$900/month for a family of four (Section 1)—and the bill mandates maximizing enrollment (Section 8). The emergency clause (Section 10) rushes implementation without a clear cost analysis, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill.

2. Risk of Abuse

The program adopts SNAP rules (Section 1, Subsection 5), allowing purchases of candy, soda, and snacks. SNAP has faced issues like trafficking, with 1.3% of benefits misused historically (USDA data). Extending benefits to a harder-to-track population increases fraud risks. The bill integrates with SNAP's EBT system but lacks enhanced fraud prevention, potentially wasting taxpayer money on non-essential purchases.

3. Prioritizing Non-Citizens

Many Oregon citizens—veterans, seniors, and low-income families—struggle with food insecurity. Yet, SB 611 allocates resources to non-citizens, including undocumented immigrants. Section 2 ensures non-English speakers are treated with "respect, fairness, and dignity," but why isn't this focus applied to citizens facing bureaucratic hurdles? Oregon should prioritize its own residents first.

4. Undermining Federal Policy

Federal laws (8 U.S.C. 1611-1613, 7 U.S.C. 2015(f)) restrict SNAP for non-citizens to enforce immigration policy. SB 611 bypasses these by excluding immigration-based restrictions (Section 5), undermining federal law and incentivizing illegal immigration.

This could strain Oregon's resources further by attracting more migrants seeking benefits.

5. Lack of Planning

SB 611 requires implementation by January 1, 2027 (Section 9), but provides no data on expected participants, costs, or sustainability. There's no mandate for an independent audit to evaluate effectiveness, risking unchecked growth and wasted funds.

I urge you to reject SB 611. This program burdens taxpayers, risks abuse, and prioritizes non-citizens over Oregonians. Instead, let's strengthen support for our citizens—veterans, seniors, and families—before extending new benefits to those ineligible for federal aid. Oregonians deserve priority and fiscal responsibility.

Thank you