



TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
FROM: PCUN
SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611

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

My name is Cynthia Ramirez and I'm a Policy Associate at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and Latinx working families to improve their working and living conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy. PCUN 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.

At PCUN, we firmly believe that food is a human right. No one should have to go without basic nutrition, regardless of where they were born. However, for far too long, our communities have been systematically excluded from vital food assistance programs due to immigration status - despite contributing billions to Oregon's economy. It is unacceptable that in a state where farmworkers are the backbone of our food system, so many are denied the basic right to food because of their immigration status.

Farmworkers in Oregon earn, on average, just \$34,500 a year, a wage that falls far too short of meeting the exponential costs of living. Rent is rising, utility bills soaring, and the cost of food is no exception. The situation is even more dire when we consider that farmworkers are often disproportionately affected by extreme weather conditions. They risk their health and safety, working in harsh temperatures and dangerous conditions to ensure that our state's food supply is maintained. Yet, despite their vital role in our food system, they are excluded from critical food assistance programs that would allow them to care for themselves and their families.

The reality is clear, this is not only a bill about fairness, this bill is a response to a fundamental injustice. Farmworkers deserve to have the same access to food as the people they feed. When our farmworker communities have access to the nutrition they need, their health improves, their families thrive, and our entire state benefits. We all win when we support the health and well-being of those who give so much to this state.

Senate Bill 611 is a necessary step to right a longstanding wrong and ensure that all Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to live with dignity and build a better future for themselves and their families.

On behalf of PCUN and our members, we urge you to support SB 611, Food for All Oregonians because no Oregonian should go hungry.

Thank you,

Cynthia Ramirez
Policy Associate
PCUN