

Testimony in support of SB 611 - Food For All Oregonians

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

My name is John Detweiler, and I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 611, the Food for All Oregonians Act. This legislation represents an essential step toward ensuring that every resident of our state has access to the nutrition they need to thrive, regardless of their immigration status.

Oregon is a state that thrives on the diversity, dedication, and contributions of all its residents. Undocumented immigrants, who make up a significant portion of our community, are integral to the strength of our economy and society. According to recent studies, undocumented workers contribute over \$80 million annually in state and local taxes and play an essential role in industries such as agriculture, construction, and service sectors—sectors that are the backbone of Oregon's economy. ([Oregon Center for Public Policy](#)) Despite their contributions, these hardworking individuals and their families often face barriers to accessing basic resources, including nutrition assistance.

Currently, tens of thousands of families across Oregon are experiencing food insecurity, a crisis exacerbated by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising costs of living. Many of these families include children, seniors, and other vulnerable individuals who are unable to access federal nutrition programs solely due to their immigration status. SB 611 addresses this gap by extending critical food assistance to all Oregonians, ensuring that no one in our state goes hungry because of where they were born.

Access to nutritious food is not just a matter of compassion—it is also a matter of public health and economic stability. Hunger negatively impacts educational outcomes, workforce productivity, and long-term health, leading to greater costs for our healthcare and social service systems. By investing in food security for all residents, Oregon can build a healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous future for everyone.

As someone who believes in the values of equity, dignity, and community, I urge you to support SB 611. This legislation will affirm that Oregon is a state where all residents, regardless of their immigration status, have the opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives. Let us recognize and honor the contributions of undocumented Oregonians by ensuring they and their families have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Thank you for considering this important issue and for your commitment to serving the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

John Detweiler
Deschutes County