

Submitter: Luis Pineda

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

My name is Luis, and I'd like to share my family's story to express how vital food assistance programs like Food For All Oregonians impact on families working to build a better future.

My wife and I had our children early in life. To support our family, we took turns working and attending school so one of us could continue studying while the other managed the household. Sacrifices like this are common in the early stages of building a family, but they're increasingly difficult to sustain without support. When living in other states we had limited support from extended family, it is when public assistance programs became very important.

Even though we prioritized food, education, and health, there were weeks when our grocery budget barely stretched far enough. Our children practice their math skills while comparing prices and calculating quantities at the store just to help us make ends meet. In those moments, access to food programs made a big difference. They allowed us to keep our family stable and our children focused on learning and growing.

Today, both of our sons have succeeded thanks to community and government support. One is finishing a master's degree in public policy and management at the University of Oregon, and the other will graduate early this year with a degree in Economics and Social Policy from a California university. My wife now works in public higher education, and I work in the private sector. We also serve our community through volunteer work—I've dedicated nearly 2,000 hours as a first responder over the past five years.

Our family's success story was made possible in part by the support we received when we needed it most. These programs helped us succeed and give back.

Programs like Food For All Oregonians are not just expenses. They are investments in people, in children, and in the future of our communities. I hope our story serves as a reminder of the real and lasting impact they can have.

Thank you.

Luis Pineda