



KA 'AHA LĀHUI O 'OLEKONA

HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB OF OREGON & SW WASHINGTON

AloHa Resource & Community Center

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Chartered Club of
The Association of Hawaiian
Civic Clubs
Founded By Prince Kūhiō in 1918

March 25, 2025

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
SUBJECT: Support for SB 611 – Food for All Oregonians

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

My name is Leialoha Ka'ula, and I serve as the Executive Director of Ka Aha Lāhui O 'Olekona (KALO), the Hawaiian Civic Club of Oregon and Southwest Washington. I am writing in strong support of SB 611, the Food for All Oregonians bill, ensuring that all Oregonians—especially our keiki (children) and kūpuna (elders)—have access to the nutritious food they need, regardless of immigration status.

Food insecurity has reached a crisis point in our communities. Today, 1 in 6 children in Oregon faces hunger. That is not only heartbreaking—it's unacceptable. According to the Oregon Food Bank Network, food insecurity in our state rose by 21% from 2019 to 2020, with as many as 1.7 million people turning to food assistance.¹

We have seen the effects firsthand. In the past six years, the Micronesian Islander Community has experienced a dramatic rise in the need for food, housing, and other basic resources. At MIC's food distribution events, we serve 75 to over 100 households per month, reaching up to 400 individuals. However, these efforts cannot meet the long-term needs of our communities.

Food pantries, while essential, are short-term solutions to a systemic issue. Long-term, equitable access to healthy food is critical—not only for the well-being of individuals and families but for the strength of our entire state. When our children are nourished, they thrive in school. When families are food secure, their overall health improves. And when no one has to choose between dinner and a utility bill, our communities and local economies grow stronger.

SB 611 offers a bold and compassionate step forward. It ensures that no one is left behind and that every Oregonian—no matter where they were born—has the dignity of food on their table.

I urge you to vote yes on SB 611. Let's ensure Oregon is a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Mahalo for your time and leadership.

Me ke aloha,

Leialoha Ka'ula

Leialoha Ka'ula
Executive Director
Ka Aha Lahui O 'Olekona Hawaiian Civic Club
of Oregon and SW Washington