

Dear Honorable Lawmakers,

I am writing as a mother and a refugee from Congo who found a new home in Portland. I came here with my little boy after losing almost everything in the war. I am so grateful to be safe, but we have faced another struggle here: hunger. When we first arrived, I had no job, limited English, and very little money. There were days I could only give my son plain rice because that's all we had. I often pretended I wasn't hungry so he would eat the small portions we could afford.

No mother should have to starve herself to feed her child, especially not in a state like ours that prides itself on community and caring. Now I'm learning English and looking for work, but it takes time. What kept us going were kind neighbors and a local food pantry that understood our situation. I'm sharing my story because I want you to understand how urgent this is. Passing Senate Bill 611 would mean families like mine aren't left to fend for themselves. Food is more than nutrition—it's hope, it's stability. Please vote to pass SB 611 so that refugees and immigrants rebuilding their lives here can do so without the constant fear of hunger. Oregon should be a place of refuge, not hunger.