



**Support Senate Bill 611**  
**Senate Committee On Human Services**  
**March 26th, 2025**

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

My name is Arielle Hacker and I am the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator at Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCA Oregon), a statewide nonprofit dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect through comprehensive primary prevention strategies. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 611—Food for All Oregonians—which would ensure Youth and Elder Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

**Research shows economic and concrete supports—access to food, housing, child care, and economic supports—reduce child welfare system involvement<sup>1</sup>, improve academic performance<sup>2</sup>, relieve financial stressors on parents and caregivers, and improve overall child and family wellbeing.** Food assistance is also linked to improved health outcomes<sup>3</sup>, reduced health care costs, eviction prevention<sup>4</sup>, job retention<sup>5</sup>, and improved behavioral health.<sup>6</sup>

Oregon is facing a hunger crisis, and it is getting worse. Today, 1 in 6 children in Oregon don't have enough to eat, and one-third more Oregonians face hunger than before the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>7</sup> Food pantries across the state are confronting record-breaking levels of demand—the Oregon Food Bank has never before seen this level of urgent need in its 40+ years of food banking. Despite paying *billions* in annual taxes in Oregon, immigrant Oregonians are twice as likely to face hunger and poverty in our state. Thousands of immigrant and refugee Oregonians are excluded from vital food assistance due to their immigration status.

PCA Oregon partners with over 50 community-based organizations, state agencies, and advocacy coalitions to actualize our vision for an Oregon where all kids and families are living happy and purposeful lives with hope for the future. This vision hinges on our youngest

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.chapinhall.org/research/economic-and-concrete-supports-are-key-ingredients-in-programs-designed-to-prevent/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/School-Meals-are-Essential-Health-and-Learning\\_FNL.pdf](https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/School-Meals-are-Essential-Health-and-Learning_FNL.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-role-snap-improving-health-well-being.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://frac.org/blog/food-insecurity-and-housing-instability-are-inextricably-linked>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4431109>

<sup>6</sup> [https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10105313/#:~:text=0.97\)%20among%20adults.-State%20adoption%20of%20both%20SNAP%20eligibility%20policies%20\(ie%2C%20state%20elimination,%2C%200.91%3B%2095%25%20CI%2C](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10105313/#:~:text=0.97)%20among%20adults.-State%20adoption%20of%20both%20SNAP%20eligibility%20policies%20(ie%2C%20state%20elimination,%2C%200.91%3B%2095%25%20CI%2C)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.oregonfoodbank.org/posts/state-of-hunger-address-2025-the-case-for-food-for-all-oregonians-sb-611>

Oregonians and their families having access to the economic and concrete supports required to meet their basic needs.

Reflecting on my own personal experiences growing up in a single parent, working class household, having access to free and nutritious food would have alleviated a significant burden on my mother who had to work multiple jobs at a time to afford our basic needs. No one should have to choose between paying their bills or putting food on the table. Food is a Human Right. Our freedom, our health, our ability to thrive all depend on access to food that is nutritious and culturally familiar.

**We are calling on our lawmakers to pass SB 611—Food for All Oregonians—this legislative season.** Thank you for your ongoing commitment to children and families in Oregon.

Sincerely,

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