

Dear Esteemed Legislators,

My name is Monicah Njoroge, and I am a first-generation Kenyan American living in Hillsboro. Growing up, I watched my parents struggle to feed us despite working tirelessly. Because of their immigration status, we didn't qualify for food assistance. I remember the gnawing feeling of hunger while trying to focus on my homework, the shame I felt when I had to pretend I wasn't hungry at school.

The lack of food affected my confidence, my ability to learn, and my sense of belonging. I was a child, yet I carried the burden of our household's struggle in silence. Today, I am working hard to build a life, but the memories of hunger have never left me.

SB 611 is a necessary step toward justice. No child should have to suffer because of their parents' immigration status. I urge you to pass this bill and give children like I once was the chance to thrive without hunger. Food is foundational to everything, health, education, dignity. Let's give all Oregonians that foundation.