



26 March 2025

Senate Committee on Human Services  
Oregon Legislature

Chair Blouin, Vice Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee:

RE: Senate Bill 611

My name is Jimmy Jones, and I serve as the Executive Director of the **Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency** in Salem. We serve low-income residents of Marion, Polk, and nine other counties across Oregon. Annually, we provide more than \$80 million in services and direct client assistance for housing, homelessness, energy and weatherization, and early learning programs to more than 60,000 Oregonians in poverty. I also serve as the Vice President for Legislative Affairs at the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, sit on the Housing Committee of the Racial Justice Council, and previously was a member of the House Bill 2100 Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities, and recently Chaired the Legislature's Joint Task Force on Hospital Discharge.

I am writing to express strong support of Senate Bill 611. In my work, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact food insecurity has on individuals and families. Among those most impacted immigrants and mixed-status households who, despite working long hours, contributing meaningfully to our communities, and paying taxes, are ineligible for federally funded nutrition programs solely because of their immigration status.

By expanding the state funded nutrition assistance program Oregon will address this injustice, by reducing barriers, increasing access and upholding the dignity of all Oregonians. Especially important Senate Bill 611 prioritizes two especially vulnerable groups; those under 26 and seniors over 55 by ensuring equitable access to food. Equally important is the bills commitment to creating a culturally responsive system including a community-based advisory group is critical to ensuring equity an accountability in implementation.

Food is a basic human right, for these reasons, I urge the passage of Senate Bill 611. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Jones  
Executive Director