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Submitter: Dr. Barry Jerkins, Branch President
On Behalf Of: Linn Benton NAACP
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Topic: Endorsement of SB 611

Since 1909, the NAACP has worked to ensure political, educational, social, and economic equality for all people while eliminating race-based discrimination. Our Linn Benton Branch, established in 1971, advances this mission through engagement that confronts racial injustice in our community and the broader state of Oregon.

Our branch urges the Oregon Senate to approve SB 611 that would establish the Food for All Oregonians Program.

For the state of Oregon and its residents to thrive, it is essential that each of us get enough to eat, regardless of immigration status or other bureaucratic criteria. SB 611 will provide nutrition assistance to impoverished people who have historically been excluded from federal food benefits because of their immigration status. Its passage is necessary to support immigrant and refugee communities amid a slew of destructive policies promulgated by the Trump administration. Our many farmworker families in communities from Tillamook to Ontario are a critical component of Oregon's agriculture industry. Their often overlooked contributions fuel our state's economy and bring food to grocery stores and into kitchens throughout the state.

There is nothing like the dread bubbling in your stomach, the shortened breath due to anxiety or the moments when you feel like you're paralyzed with worry that you can't feed your babies and children. That you are helpless as their health declines and with that, too, their future capacity for learning. Let us work to prevent this.

Please support SB 611. It is a wise investment in the future of all Oregonians.

Respectfully,
Dr. Barry Jerkins
Branch President, Linn Benton NAACP