

Submitter: DESTINY MENDEZ  
On Behalf Of: EL TORITO  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

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

My name is Destiny Mendez, Store Manager at El Torito Meat Supermarket. El Torito is in strong support of Senate Bill 611, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure Youth and Elderly Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

This program has been a staple in our store and community. 90% of our customers within our community are customers of Oregon Food Stamps. I have seen first hand the amount of support this program provides for these families. The basic needs to cook enough healthy meals for a full sized family is exactly what this support does for these families. Since Double Bucks coupons were added as a bonus, our customers have been super delighted and look forward to using their coupons on extra fruits and vegetables.

I have witnessed that it has blessed a lot of elders with the ability to take home more veggies and delicious fruits which is something that has become harder for them since a lot of them are mobility limited due to their health which limits their labor. They express their gratitude with every single purchase. Recently with all the price increases in the costs of foods we have been noticing the anguish with our customers. For example the price of a carton of eggs. This has been the topic of discussion within social media worldwide.

Immigration regulations are being extremely targeted on our hispanic and minority communities. This is causing extreme paranoia with these people since their rights are being stripped and now they can be detained regardless of their immigration status. Therefore, there will be more unemployed hispanics and minorities causing them to result in hunger and poverty. Unfortunately a lot of our immigrant communities have children and when the parents of these children are stripped of their way of providing for homes, they will be left with no other choice than to starve. We are here to provide for our community and our country. We are essential to the food chain in America, we purchase our vegetables from our US farms and sell it to our customers regardless of their status. We are seeking justice and support for our farm workers, children of immigrants and targeted minorities and our elders.

Everyone in our community will be affected if we are stripped of these helpful programs. We're here to advocate for those who do not have a voice. Access to food is a human right. It should not be a topic for debate. In the near future, we hope more people will have access to Food for All programs as well as Double Bucks Coupons.

With extreme gratitude,  
El Torito Meat Market,  
628 Lancaster Dr Ne,  
Salem, Oregon.