

My name is Yesenia Solorzano-Madden, and I'm sharing a testimony from one of our Southern Oregon community partners. She is a DACA recipient and, due to concerns about potential retaliation from the current administration, prefers to remain anonymous in the public record.

Here is her statement:

As the daughter of immigrant farmworkers living in Southern Oregon, I spent much of my childhood cared for by relatives while my parents worked in the fields from sunrise to sunset to provide for us. I remember grocery shopping trips where my parents always asked, "Do we need it or Do we want it?" Growing up, I thought this was a lesson on how to spend our money wisely, but now, as an adult, I realize they were often choosing between putting food on the table and simply making ends meet. As a mother of two, I face similar choices, much like my parents did while working in the fields of California.

I support Senate Bill 611, which would help ensure that children six and under don't go to bed hungry. I wish a program like this, would have been available when I was growing up; it would have provided my parents with the support they desperately needed. It might have allowed them to be more present in our lives and attend important school events.

Imagine preparing for the biggest school performance of the year, practicing for weeks, and then scanning the crowd, hoping to see your parents, only to find their seats empty. They had to ensure their paychecks covered the cost of living. In the agricultural sector, farmworkers are often paid per bucket; the more they harvested, the more they earned, but even then, the amounts were small. My parents constantly had to decide whether to keep a roof over our heads or spend quality time with us.

My parents did everything they could to keep us fed. Sometimes, dinner was whatever my mom could put together with the little we had — meals she said she loved as a child and thought we would, too. In reality, she was just stretching the groceries.

If I could ask one thing, it would be for you to pass Senate Bill 611 so that a parent can be seated in those empty seats and that young version of me can see their parents there.

Thank you.