



Native American Youth and Family Center

5135 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland, OR 97218 | p 503.288.8177 | f 503.288.1260 | nayapdx.org

February 5, 2020

To: Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

RE: Senate Bill 555 – Support

Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Anderson and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is William Miller, I am Blackfeet and Cherokee and I serve as the Advocacy Manager with the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) located in Portland, Oregon. NAYA's wraparound programs directly serve over 2,000 individual Native American youth, adults, and Elders every year and positively impacts more than 10,000 Native Americans living in Portland's growing Native American community a year. I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 555.

The NAYA Family Center provides direct social services for communities in need. One of these critical services is for those needing food assistance. According to the Oregon Hunger Taskforce, the American Indian/ Alaska Native community faces the highest rates of hunger and food insecurity. Allowing our community to access additional resources through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and increasing our community's ability to receive more food from participating farmers markets, farm share programs, and select independently owned grocery stores will continue to help bridge the gap of food insecurity and will increase outcomes related to social determinants of health. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to exacerbate food insecurity within our community. SB 555 will only help to support those already hurting.

On behalf of the Native American Youth and Family Center we urge the passage of SB 555 – increasing access to food, creating healthier alternatives, and bridging health disparities.

Thank you,

William Miller
Advocacy Manager
Native American Youth and Family Center