

March 15, 2021  
Oregon House Committee on Human Services

As a Registered Dietitian, holding a Master's Degree in Nutrition Science, I appreciate the intention behind HB2348. There are many studies that support a plant based diet and its healthful and environmentally sound approach to human nutrition. However this bill would have a financial and potentially a negative effect on people in acute and long term care.

Unintended weight loss during these times has a greater immediate negative impact on individual's outcome, People in these facilities needs to have foods they are familiar with and actually consume.

In acute care hospitals minimum of 30% of our patients come into our hospitals with moderate to severe malnutrition. For over 40 years I led the dietitian team at the only academic health care facility in Oregon, and no matter what the dietitian's personal/professional beliefs about plant based diets they know that getting people to eat is more important.

Adults and children living with cancer have significant taste changes due to their treatment and whatever they will eat is what we would provide them. Our patients, regardless of diagnosis, deserve the right to select what they want to eat.

Most acute care hospitals already provide vegan and vegetarian meals for their inpatients. The retail spaces in healthcare facilities serve what the customer want. There are generally vegan and vegetarian items available, but to have a full meal each day which is not popular would be a waste of food and impact their bottom line.

Making long term care facilities to offer plant based meals every day to a population that has 1.8% who are vegetarian/vegan (Harris Poll 2017) would have a negative economic impact on the already underfunded food budget of these facilities.

I would support the efforts behind this bill being transferred to an assertive public health campaign encouraging plant based intake. Teaching the value of whole foods such as grains, nuts, legumes, beans and generous helpings of fruits and vegetables will improve the health of all Oregonians.

Jessie M. Pavlinac, MS, RD, CSR, LD, FAND  
Oregon City, Oregon