

TO: House Committee on Judiciary
FROM: Matt Newell-Ching, Public Policy Manager
RE: Support for HB 3265 to begin rebuilding trust in our communities
DATE: March 25, 2021



Chair Bynum and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to end hunger and its root causes. We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we build community power to dismantle systems and policies that drive hunger and poverty.

Feeling safe is foundational to every family's ability to put food on the table, keep a roof over our heads, and thrive. Yet we have seen first-hand in recent years that immigration policy decisions have heightened a climate of fear for too many Oregonians who are immigrants. The cumulative impact of these decisions has created a chilling effect that impacts our ability to put food on the table. Many community members have reported not feeling safe accessing food assistance programs like SNAP, school meals, and even food pantries because of fear. No one should have to choose between eating and keeping your family together.

Oregon Food Bank was proud to join with dozens of organizations and an overwhelming majority of Oregonians to uphold our state's sanctuary law and stand against racial profiling by rejecting Measure 105 in 2018. This was a clear statement that Oregon seeks to be a place that is welcoming to all and values the safety of everyone in our communities.

Yet there are gaps in our 34-year old sanctuary law that need to be addressed. The lived experience of Oregonians shows us that state and local government agencies routinely share information, cooperate and collaborate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to target and arrest Oregonians. This perpetuates fear and causes harm to our communities.

Oregon Food Bank urges the legislature to pass HB 3265 to strengthen Oregon's sanctuary promise. In the strict sense, the bill prohibits local law enforcement and governments from working with and communicating with federal agents for the purpose of immigration enforcement, strengthens the rights of Oregonians. But the impact has the potential to be much bigger than this. Combined with proposed changes at the federal level, strengthening our sanctuary law is an important step in re-establishing trust in our communities that is critical for every family to feel safe and thrive.

We have the opportunity to rebuild and emerge stronger. This is our moment to embrace our shared values, care for each other and take bold action in support of *all* Oregonians.

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