

I am from Talent, a small town near Ashland and Medford that was recently devastated by the Almeda Wildfire. Gardening is a common hobby here, as is hen-keeping and beekeeping, and I see no reason why people should be prevented from organizing with their neighbors to create a community garden, especially during these hard times where access to food is harder than ever. In 2019, ACCESS provided food assistance to as many as 1 in 4 people Jackson County, and since the pandemic and wildfires, there is no reason to assume that number has gone anywhere but up - why, knowing this, should we make it harder for people to feed themselves? I garden myself, and I also used to volunteer with my local high school's gardening club, and I can tell you that there are a lot of young people, and presumably older folks as well, who are very interested in growing their own food but are unable to because they rent from landlords with restrictive policies on these activities. There is no good reason to restrict the right of people to live in a self-sustaining way and help their neighbors while doing so! Broadening this bill will help feed people, cultivate useful skills, and strengthen communities, which is in everyone's interest.