

TO: House Committee on Revenue
FROM: Matt Newell-Ching, Public Policy Manager
RE: Support for HB 2819 - Leave No Worker Behind
DATE: March 2, 2021



Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Pham and Reschke, and members of the committee,

Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 11 Oregonians were food insecure. In 2020, 1 in 4 in our communities faced hunger – a dramatic increase. And the public health and economic impacts of the pandemic have fallen hardest on people who have faced systemic inequities, including many immigrants excluded from various types of federal assistance.

Oregon Food Bank Supports HB 2819 because all workers deserve the dignity of being able to put food on the table, have a safe place to call home, and to thrive. Yet many jobs - including jobs now deemed essential - do not pay wages sufficient to meet life's basic needs.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is an important tool that helps address the gap between low wages and life's necessities. Put simply, the EITC changes lives. The EITC is a refundable tax credit that gives families the freedom to invest in ways that are often transformative. Families often report using the credit to purchase or repair a car, pay down debt, make a deposit and first month's rent, take classes, or start to build savings.

Yet many working families are not eligible for the EITC. Specifically, households with any member of the family who files taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) are ineligible to receive the credit. **The exclusion is so broad that if even one member of a household files with an ITIN, the entire household is completely ineligible.** This includes nearly 70,000 U.S. citizen children who live in households with a filer who uses an ITIN.

HB 2819 addresses this inequity by ending the exclusion of households with ITIN filers from Oregon's EITC, and matches the lost value of the federal credit.

This is significant because kids who live in households that receive the EITC have better health and education outcomes, and earn more as adults. If passed, HB 2819 would ensure that the positive outcomes relating to health, education, and future income that are associated with the EITC are available to *all* kids and families in Oregon.

Oregon Food Bank urges the committee's support for HB 2819 so that we may emerge stronger from the pandemic and build a brighter future for Oregon's kids and families.

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