

Submitter: Beyana Magoon
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education
Measure: HB3089

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Beyana Magoon, I am a student at Portland State University and an employee at the Portland State University Food Pantry. I am here today to speak in support of HB 3089.

Lifelong food insecurity has shaped who I am today. I grew up in a family of four that struggled financially throughout my life. My dad was a professor and educator for 30+ years who taught special education, English and literature. He held a master's degree and was an exemplary teacher. Due to low salaries, constantly being overworked and limited benefits, and with my mom not being able to work because she was raising my brother and I at home, they were unable to make ends meet. Growing up we relied heavily on our local food banks to support us. Without them we would have been without food many days of the week.

The impact of financial instability in my family throughout my upbringing has caused me to internalize guilt, shame and fear, which in turn has led to long term struggles with my mental health. I ended up dropping out of high school so I could work and make money. Access to food has been and remains to be a significant struggle in my life.

I never thought I would be able to come to college because of the cost. Not just the cost of attending, but the cost of solely supporting myself in addition. The cost of housing, transportation, bills, utilities, etc., is barely covered by financial aid, student loans and my job. The cost of declining mental health due to so many barriers probably weighs heaviest.

I am making it work the best I can because I have big dreams and big goals.

I have a deep desire to support and empower myself, my loved ones, my community and our collective community at large. My hopes for the future include finishing my political science degree and attending graduate school for public policy with the goal of supporting and empowering LGBTQIA+ youth through policy analyst work. To be able to achieve my goals of reducing barriers for youth, my own barriers need to be reduced as well. I am so grateful that my school has a food pantry so mine and so many other students can experience food security, some of us for the first time in our lives.

This is why I care about HB 3089. I have seen first hand through my own upbringing and through my work with my school's food pantry, the impact and importance this bill will have.

I have seen and felt the relief, joy and anxiety that come with accessing food related resources. Knowing the students I support will have a meal that day and being able to help provide that resource is how I continue to show up each day. The barriers that students face daily can be insurmountable. Food access should not be a barrier to our wellbeing and being able to achieve our goals. This bill could help decrease the stigmatization that surrounds food insecurity and provide increasingly necessary resources. Everyone has the right to food.

Thank you for your time, and we hope that students can count on your support of HB 3089.