

Submitter: Gate Kwaleso  
On Behalf Of: OSCC  
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education  
Measure: HB3089

#### Hunger Free Campus Testimony

I'm coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and I've moved to Eugene during the Spring 2022. On my first day here, me and my sister went to Walmart in order to buy some food and dishes. Entering Walmart, I got choked by the prices I saw; prices exceeding by about 60% what we used to spend back home for the same type of items. I already knew that items were more expensive in the United States compared to Congo but I didn't expect such a gap. Looking at my sister, I knew it would be hard especially because we are two living here and depending on our parents back home. In order to lower our expenses, we started going to food pantries every week; not missing a single one. The food pantry is great, it affords the basic needs, such as some fruits, chicken, rice, oatmeal, but not everything. Thus it helps us for about half of the food we need. Additionally, and unfortunately, most of the time, the food provided has already expired or closed from the expiration date. This hurts our health. As a result, we still need to pay for 80% of our food.

With inflation, this issue is getting worse. Food is getting more and more expensive everyday, and we are now unable to afford items such as beef, eggs or juice even though they are the most basic things in a fridge. Us, international students, we represent a significant part of the United States economy; we pay way more than U.S residents. On the other hand, we receive less job opportunities (we can only work on campus), we have less scholarships opportunities, less financial aid for articles like books, and less other other opportunities. Combine the expensive food, expensive tuition, expensive insurance, expensive rent, and less financial opportunities, and you see how hard our life is. In addition, we have the pressure of keeping high grades so as to stay in this country. All this stress ruins our health. Reason why we come asking and begging for help again and again is because we really need your help.