

SUBJECT: Yes on SB 610

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Carter McKenzie and I live in Dexter, Oregon. I am writing in support of **Senate Bill 610**, Food for All Oregonians, which would ensure all of our neighbors, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

Food is a basic human need, and food security is a basic human right. It troubles me deeply to know how many go hungry in the state of Oregon, especially children. It is shocking to me that 62,000 people are currently excluded from food security resources simply because of their immigration status.

Food is a basic need and right no matter where you were born.

Hunger was a crisis in our communities before the pandemic, and the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have been especially severe for newly arrived Oregonians. Immigrants, refugees and Compact of Free Association (COFA) community members, in particular, have long faced higher rates of hunger and poverty in Oregon. Here is one example: Latinx and Pacific Islander Oregonians experienced hunger at twice the rate of white Oregonians before the pandemic— and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living.

Food for All Oregonians will create a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP, and it will make applying for assistance more welcoming. The program will ensure that everyone is aware of this vital support through community navigation and outreach, and improved language access. It will build on successful, community-driven navigator models to ensure trust and community safety.

Food for All Oregonians is good for Oregon. When all of our neighbors are getting the food they need, we are all better off, and Oregon thrives.

I am urging your yes vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Carter McKenzie  
she/her/hers