

Subject:

Yes on SB 610

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

My name is Erin McCarley and I live in Nehalem, on the Oregon coast and I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 610, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure that all of our neighbors, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

I am employed at Tillamook Bay Community College, where we see the impact of hunger every day. I am not representing the College, but want to share my personal experience. A national study of basic needs insecurity in 2020 demonstrated that hunger is pervasive among college students. Students at our school had the highest rates of food insecurity of any college students in the state, with 53% reporting that they worried about running out of food before they had the money to buy more. We have recognized this need and responded in many ways, including by running a food pantry, which serves our students, regardless of immigration status. An important focus for us is supporting students through our ESOL and GED in Spanish courses where we serve many undocumented students. We know that these community members face tremendous barriers, including housing and employment barriers. We are proud to be able to provide food through our pantry for them. But we recognize that we can't replace the food supports that they would receive through SNAP, were they eligible.

Food for All Oregonians will create a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP and make applying for assistance more welcoming. This will be a tremendous support for our students, who are working so hard to learn English, earn their GED and better provide for themselves and their families. We know that our students succeed when their basic needs are met. Kids do better in school, our families' health improves and our economy thrives.

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

Sincerely

Erin McCarley

Tillamook Bay Community College