



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

On behalf of Consejo Hispano, I am writing to express support for Senate Bill 610, Food for All Oregonians which would ensure all of our community members, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

Hunger was a crisis in our communities well before the pandemic, and the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have fallen hardest on the Oregonians who are on the front lines ensuring that the rest of us are fed. The number of families struggling to afford food rose steeply in the pandemic and remain high, especially among children and households of color. The pandemic created additional challenges for communities of color to access affordable, healthy foods as the cost of food and staples increased, public transit limited operations, and grocery stores have changed their hours because they do not have enough staff. The cumulative effects of pre-pandemic disparities have left many Oregonians of color with fewer resources to buffer themselves against the current economic landscape.

Consejo Hispano serves the Latinx community of Columbia, Tillamook and Clatsop Counties – the same community members who are working in agriculture, canneries, fishing, dairy production, forestry, and other seasonal work. These are also the same community members who struggle month after month, particularly during low work/production seasons, to feed themselves and their families. These community members keep the food supply chain moving, and during the pandemic we acknowledged their contributions and sacrifice for the common good, and hailed them as heroes for being essential workers. The injustice that this population works so hard to keep all of us fed but suffer from hunger themselves is jarring and needs to be remedied immediately. The global pandemic should have been a wake-up call that makes it crystal clear to Oregonians once and for all just who butters their bread – after making both the butter and the bread.

At Consejo Hispano, we know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. SB610 will allow kids to do better in school, our families' health and well-being improves and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This will be true in every corner of Oregon – in rural, urban, and suburban communities alike. When all Oregonians are getting the food they need, all of Oregon thrives.

We urge you to vote yes on SB610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jenny Pool Radway
Executive Director
Consejo Hispano