



February 23, 2023

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

On behalf of the Afghan Support Network (ASN), I am writing to express support for 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.

Hunger was a crisis in our communities well before the pandemic, and the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have fallen hardest on 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. Just one example: Latinx and Pacific Islander Oregonians experienced hunger at twice the rate of white Oregonians pre-pandemic<sup>1</sup> — and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living.

At ASN, we work with newly arrived Afghan refugees and immigrants who had been steadfast allies of the United States for the last 20 years. Many of these allies are struggling to put food on the table for their families and those who were left behind and have found away to escape and make it here by themselves have little to no access to resources. This bill will be critical to ensure these folks who have been allies and supporters of the United States for the last 20 years have access to the most basic need a human has, food.

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[https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon\\_food\\_insecurity\\_rates\\_at\\_arrival\\_of\\_covid\\_2018-2020.pdf](https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_at_arrival_of_covid_2018-2020.pdf)






At ASN, we know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. SB 610 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 of our neighbors are getting the food that they need, all of Oregon thrives.

This is why we urge your yes vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yahya Haqiqi", written over a horizontal line.

**Yahya Haqiqi**  
President & CEO  
Afghan Support Network

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