

**ACCENT NETWORK**

10175 SW Barbur Blvd Suite 309B,  
Portland, OR 97219  
971-280-6738



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

On behalf of nonprofit Accent Network, 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.

The mission of the non-profit Accent Network is to help immigrants and refugees integrate into the Oregon community. We know firsthand that many immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker families are denied access to federal nutrition and food programs, exacerbating poverty and food insecurity for the state's immigrant communities, including illegal immigrants.

Immigrants in Oregon also face barriers, and some are unique to immigrants, while others are also faced by non-immigrants, making accessing programs more challenging. These barriers include a lack of information on available nutrition programs, confusing rules regarding noncitizen eligibility, transportation issues, distrust of government agencies, and language access.

According to our observations, nearly half of Accent Network's served population is impacted by food insecurity.

We also know that some immigrant families are turning away from federal nutrition and food programs needed to improve their food security, nutrition, health, and well-being, SNAP, due to fear of deportation or possible problems with obtaining citizenship in the future.

We oppose this policy and any other proposal that would make immigrants choose between eating today and their families' long-term health and well-being.

Food For All Oregonian's program is essential to addressing food insecurity and boosting health, achievement, economic security, and opportunity for everyone. We are all healthier and stronger when everyone in our communities has access to the food and nutrition they need. .

At Accent Network, 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,

Marina Drots

Accent Network

