



RE: Yes on SB 610

February 24, 2023

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

My name is Ali Ibrahim and I live in Portland, Oregon and 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. I am the Executive Director of Somali Oregon Service Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing services to underserved communities in Oregon.

The main reason I am supporting Food for All Oregonians is because it is helping people across many different immigrant and refugee communities to have access to food. It helps not only me and my family but also families in the entire community physically and economically. There are many people in my community that may be eligible for SNAP but do not know they are eligible or how to apply. With Food for All, more people will have the support they need to ensure access to the food they need.

Hunger was a crisis in our communities 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.

It is important to me that Food for All Oregonians will work to ensure that everyone is aware of the support that is available to them through community outreach and improved language access, because often these are barriers faced by members of my community. I feel strongly that by building on successful navigator models, Food for All will create trust and safety with communities that are in great need of this support.

We know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. Kids do better in school, our families' health and well-being improve, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This is 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 I am urging your yes vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Ali Ibrahim  
Somali Oregon Service Center  
Portland, OR

---

1

[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)