



February 27, 2023

To: Senate Human Services Committee

From: Emerson Hamlin, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for SB 610

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the chance to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a nurses union and professional association representing over 15,000 health care workers and providers, including registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, home health, and county health departments across Oregon.

ONA is deeply committed to investing in programs that will improve the health of everyone who lives in Oregon. Nurses, specifically those in public health, frequently screen patients for hunger and food insecurity, work with those who are enrolled in federal nutrition programs like SNAP, and provide nutrition education. Unfortunately, our providers see first-hand that many are not getting enough to eat across the state: one in ten people face hunger, including one in eight children.¹ Not only does inadequate nutrition result in poorer quality of life, but it also increases the risk of various health problems, including heart disease, strokes, diabetes, among other serious concerns.²

SB 610 expands SNAP benefits to immigrants, refugees, and Compact of Free Association (COFA) community members. Increasing access to food also makes it much easier for these communities to experience good health and thrive in Oregon. ONA urges a yes vote on SB 610. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin

Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

¹ *Hunger in Oregon*. Feeding America. (2023). Retrieved February 4, 2023, from <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/oregon#:~:text=In%20Oregon%2C%20407%2C840%20people%20are,of%20them%20114%2C460%20are%20children.&text=face%20hunger,to%20meet%20their%20food%20needs>.

² *Healthy Food, Healthy Oregon*. (2022). Retrieved February 4, 2023, from <https://www.heart.org/en/affiliates/oregon-local/healthy-food-healthy-oregon>