

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

My name is Sienna Kaske and I live in Portland and I am writing in **strong 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.

When I was an undergrad at Oregon State University, I was heavily involved with organizing and mobilizing around creating greater access to higher education for undocumented students, DACA recipients, and mixed-status students. Food insecurity is a growing issue on college campuses and is exacerbated for students ineligible to apply for SNAP due to citizenship status. All students from K-12 and college students should not be hungry while getting an education.

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-pandemic¹ – and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living.

Food for All Oregonians will create a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP and make applying for assistance more welcoming. SB 610 will provide families with money for groceries that match federal SNAP food assistance benefits and will build on successful, community-driven navigator models to ensure trust and community safety.

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 improves, 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,
Sienna Kaske

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https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_at_arrival_of_covid_2018-2020.pdf