



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE: February 24, 2023

TO: Senator Sara Gelser Blouin, Chair; Senator Art Robinson, Vice-Chair;
and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Alanna Braun, MD, FAAP
Oregon Pediatric Society Board Immediate Past President

SUBJECT: Support for SB 610 – Food for All Oregonians

For the record, my name is Alanna Braun, MD. I am a pediatrician in Portland and the immediate past board president of the Oregon Pediatric Society, the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I write today in strong support of SB 610, Food for All Oregonians.

Every day, I see children in my practice whose families struggle to afford the food they need to stay healthy – around one out of every five patients have trouble affording some basic need. Regularly, those families do not qualify for SNAP benefits because of their immigration status. Families with children are more likely to experience food insecurity (difficulty affording food), and children in immigrant families are at even higher risk.

Even marginal levels of food insecurity are associated with long-term health problems that are costly to individuals and our communities: birth complications, developmental problems, cognition and behavior problems, as well as health conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In addition, many families who are food insecure have to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care. This is unacceptable when we have a way to prevent this level of hardship.

SNAP benefits reduce the rate and severity of food insecurity for families, allowing more families and children to thrive. SB 610 will eliminate exclusions to SNAP based on immigration status and allow any qualifying Oregonian to receive food assistance benefits. In removing barriers from needed help, this would help tens of thousands of families, students, essential workers, and children in Oregon receive nutritious foods and stay healthy. It is our job to provide basic needs and support to people living in Oregon, and surely, we can all agree that no child in Oregon should go hungry.

Reducing barriers, including fear and stigma, around receiving supplemental nutrition benefits will be crucial in improving the health of our Oregon communities. My job as a pediatrician prioritizes prevention and keeping all kids healthy, and when the prescription is as simple as “feed families,” how can we not follow it? The Oregon Pediatric Society and I urge you to vote yes on SB 610. Thank you for your consideration.