

SUBJECT:

Yes on SB 610

BODY:

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

My name is Jazmin Prado Gomez and I live in Corvallis, 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.

Growing up within close proximity to people who have suffered through hunger in silence and not finding out until I was older has been difficult because these are our neighbors, school friends, even family who you wish you could have helped in some way. Until, one realizes that we live in a developed country with an infrastructure that should have been there for people in need during these difficult times. I support this bill for all future members of our community regardless of where they come from to never have to suffer through this kind of hardship that can have the potential of long lasting health and socio-economic effects.

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.

Food for All Oregonians will create a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP and make applying for assistance more welcoming. This includes all Oregonians who are currently excluded from getting food assistance due to immigration status while also providing outreach to these underserved communities who otherwise would not know about these programs that can help. These are most important because one of the hardest things to do when facing hunger is asking for help and being able to provide the outreach and access to this program is the first step to closing the hunger gap.

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[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)

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,  
Jazmin Prado Gomez