

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

My name is Ellie McDaniel and I live in northeast Portland, Senate District 23. 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 believe that everyone should have access to food; it simply makes sense. I know firsthand that when people's basic needs are not met, it is incredibly challenging to focus on living a healthy and thriving life in your community. 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.

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: Latine and Pacific Islander Oregonians experienced hunger at twice the rate of white Oregonians pre-pandemic — 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 is critical for our communities in Oregon to thrive.

I urge you to vote yes on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Ellen (Ellie) McDaniel