

TO: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services  
FROM: Matt Newell-Ching, Senior Policy Manager  
RE: Support for the Oregon Kids' Credit (HB 3235)  
DATE: February 27, 2023



Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Schard and Nguyen, and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is "to eliminate hunger and its root causes... *because no one should be hungry.*" We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we advocate to change policies that drive hunger and poverty. Yet today, over 114,000 kids in Oregon live in households that struggle to afford food. To put that in perspective, that's more than the combined population of Albany and Springfield.

We know that food banking alone will never solve hunger. Hunger is not just an empty stomach or an individual experience. We know that the root causes of hunger are systemic injustices – including racism and sexism. There is a direct line between these historic injustices and disparities that exist today. Oregonians who are Black, Latinx, and Indigenous, and Pacific Islander are more than twice as likely to experience hunger as Oregonians who are White. Households led by single parents who provide a disproportionate share of uncompensated care work experience significantly higher rates of hunger. Kids and families are currently facing additional stresses due to the phasing out of pandemic-related food assistance (SNAP Emergency Allotments).

### The Oregon Kids Credit (HB 3235) will Reduce Hunger in Oregon

Oregon Food Bank Supports the Oregon Kids' Credit (HB 3235) because the evidence shows this is a proven way to reduce hunger and poverty. **In 2021, the federal monthly Child Tax Credit reduced Food Insufficiency by 26%.** Sadly, that policy expired at the end of 2021. Oregon's legislature is in a strong position to ensure 200,000 kids in Oregon have access to the Oregon Kids' Credit. Oregon Center for Public Policy estimates enacting HB 3235 would **reduce child poverty in Oregon by nearly one fifth.**

The Oregon Kids' Credit is a \$1,200 refundable tax credit for each child that a low-income or working family claims on their taxes. It is targeted explicitly at the Oregonians in greatest need. It advances racial justice by reducing disparities experienced by Black, Indigenous, and other children of color. It supports single parents who perform a disproportionate share of uncompensated care work. And while the Oregon Kids' Credit would help children in every county and every corner of Oregon, children in rural Oregon stand to benefit disproportionately.

We urge the committee's support for the Oregon Kids' Credit, HB 3235.

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