

Submitter: Hannah Joseph
On Behalf Of: Seed to Table Oregon
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure: SB610

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

On behalf of Seed to Table Oregon, I am writing to express support for 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.

Hunger was a crisis in our communities well 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 — and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with COVID's ongoing impact and the rising cost of living.

As a small nonprofit education farm, Seed to Table envisions a vibrant and resilient community where all people, regardless of race, gender, geography, ability or socioeconomic status, have access to fresh produce that is nourishing, locally grown, and in keeping with their preferences. From our 4-acre farm plot, we strive to model a food system that restores ecosystems while providing equitable access to fresh foods and opportunities for community members to engage with farm-fresh foods. But we can't do it alone. We need state support to ensure that a hunger gap does not continue to fall along racial lines.

At Seed to Table Oregon, we know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. SB 610 will allow kids to do better in school, our families' health and well-being improves, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This will be 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 we urge your yes vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Hannah Joseph