



**Testimony of Ricardo Lujan Valerio, Director of Government Relations¹
In Support of SB 610 - SNAP Accessibility
Senate Committee on Human Services
February 27th, 2023**

Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Committee,

Western Oregon University is in support of SB 610, which seeks to create greater accessibility for Oregonians to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, regardless of immigration status.

Western Oregon University students are about five times more food insecure than the average American.² That is why our WOU Food Pantry has been a critical resource for our campus. The pantry received regular product and produce shipments from the Marion Polk Food Share and operates on a client-choice model which allows for low barrier participation for our community to benefit from the pantry. Our pantry team, led by volunteers and staff, also produces data reports that show the impact of food insecurity on campus. Since 2017, there have been over 6,700 visits to our pantry, nearly 17,100 times people received food, and 78,500 pounds of food distributed.

SB 610 will increase the ability for Western Oregon University and student leaders to serve our community. As part of Abby's House, Western Oregon University's student-led gender justice and equity center, the WOU Pantry provides many services that these initiatives address. The pantry team already provides assistance with applying for SNAP benefits and Money for Meals program. Our policy to serve all in need allows us to also serve a vast amount of food insecure community members. These additional resources would allow our student leaders and university staff to further our mission to end hunger at Western Oregon University and throughout our community.

For these reasons, Western Oregon University urges you to support SB 610. We thank Food For All Oregonians and other community stakeholders for leading this initiative. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns.

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² "Can you guess these Food Insecurity Statistics?" By Josh Salsbury, March 1, 2021, <https://wou.edu/foodpantry/statistics/>