

SUBJECT:
Yes on SB 610

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

My name is Eva Penor and I live in Tillamook 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.

I work in social services in Tillamook Oregon, and have seen firsthand, the effects of the current SNAP policy on folks who are actively paying into our tax system, but still do not qualify for our safety net programs. It is heartbreaking to see folks who are working so hard to provide for their families, but when they fall on hard times, they are denied basic supports.

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 – 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. Since COVID 19 folks in our county have seen food prices increase and this has caused many hardship when feeding their families. I have seen some folks, who are in the Latinx community not want to apply for benefits because of their status. Many times this means their children will struggle to get good meals. We need to do better for these very hard working individuals whose work is incredibly important to our farming communities.

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,
Eva Penor ODHS Tillamook OR