

Dear Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Robinson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services;

My name is Louvele Borja-Taisacan, Director of Advocacy and Prevention Programs of the Micronesian Islander Community. I am writing to you in support of SB 610, the Food for All Oregonians bill.

As a long time community advocate, I have seen the impact of hunger in our communities directly. Hunger and lack of access to food leads to many detrimental outcomes aside from poverty and obesity. Lack of access to food, as I have seen in my work, can greatly increase individuals' exposure to homelessness, drug use, and domestic and sexual violence. And over the last few years, I have personally witnessed the increase in need of access to food by my community and many other communities.

I have witnessed friends, family, and other community members who have also experienced limited access to food. As a person who has also experienced hunger, the internalized shame about not knowing how to provide my family their next meal can be debilitating. However, I consider myself lucky as I am fluent in English, am aware of the community resources that exist, and my citizenship status affords me specific benefits. Many in our community, however, are not as fortunate and are left to navigate hunger alone. That is why SB 610 is essential.

SB 610 will ensure that Lawful Permanent Residents, citizens from the Compact of Free Association (COFA), and other Oregonians who are immigrants or refugees will have access to food assistance. In addition, SB 610 will ensure that marginalized communities will have access to resources that are culturally appropriate, thereby allowing for an environment that increases independence and self-sufficiency.

I strongly urge you to pass SB 610, the Food for All Oregonians bill so that all Oregonians can have access to food. No one should experience hunger!

Sincerely,

Louvele "Bella" Borja-Taisacan