

FOOD ALL OREGONIANS

SUBJECT: SB 610 - I SAY YES

TO: Gelser Blouin, Chair, Robinson, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Fr. William Dickson Oruko and I live in Astoria and I am **writing to say, YES,** in **support of Senate Bill 610**, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure and provide healthy and long life to all people in our living areas and neighborhoods, regardless of their socio-economic and political backgrounds and status in walks of life.

Enough healthy food, fruits, and drinks are part of natural and basic human rights, and every child, youth, adult, the elderly, including people living with disabilities, have these undeniable rights to access or to be helped and have quality food, fruits, and drinks to nourish their bodies, mind, and spirit that they too may reflect a civilized healthy and productive community and nation. In our modern time a civilized and healthy nation, with longevity of life of citizens, is measured and appreciated by the manner she takes care and protects the basic rights and opportunities of her citizens. And which is why I am very PASSIONATE and encourage the passage of this Bill.

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-pandemic¹ — 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. **Ensures everyone is aware of this vital**

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https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_at_arrival_of_covid_2018-2020.pdf

support through community navigation and outreach, improved language access and cultural or educational barriers.

Finally, it is undeniable 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,

Fr. William D. Oruko