



February 27th, 2023

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

My name is Liz Marquez, I'm the policy associate with PCUN- Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and working Latinx families to improve their working conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy.

On behalf of PCUN, I am testifying in support of SB 610, Food for All Oregonians which would ensure all our neighbors, regardless of immigration status, have access to food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

At PCUN, we believe food is a human right and that everyone should have access to food no matter where we were born. However, our communities are excluded from food assistance and security due to immigration status. In Oregon, there are about 87,000 hand-harvest farmworkers and a significant amount are often excluded from receiving critical economic assistance and benefits due to their immigration status. Additionally, farmworkers are among the poorest workers in Oregon with a median annual wage of \$29,680¹ and often face food insecurity. Due to exclusions from benefits and programs, our communities were impacted the hardest during the pandemic and faced hunger, homelessness and economic hardship.

When systems excluded us, our community partners responded by coming together to form the Oregon Worker Relief Fund to help immigrant Oregonians. It was this direct support for individuals and families that made the difference throughout the pandemic, and we need action on that same scale to keep hunger in our communities from worsening. Our communities are not just disproportionately impacted by the pandemic but also catastrophic wildfires, heatwaves, ice storms leaving them worried about how they will put food on their table if they lose income due to illness or changing climate conditions especially with the rising cost of living.

Conversations across rural, urban and suburban Oregon make it clear that we need an equitable food assistance system that works for all of us. Food for All Oregonians will create a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP and make applying for assistance more welcoming. SB 610 would bring stability to our communities and improve families' health and well-being. We urge your support for SB 610.

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/farming-fishing-and-forestry/agricultural-workers.htm#tab-5>

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