

Good Afternoon,

Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Ways & Means Committee,

It is a pleasure and honor to be here today.

My name is Darius Yaw. I am here to support HB 3080, Hunger Free Campuses. I am Afro-Indigenous, a USN Combat Veteran of 4 tours in 2 wars, and am 80% service connected disabled. I am 20 year former chef who has experienced food insecurity and homelessness at various times of my life. I became unemployed due to the pandemic and than found work on the front lines on the streets of Portland leading a team of 100 volunteers to provide real whole food hot meals without barriers to over 15,000 a week, to people in need, including upwards of 5 tons of whole foods through our 8 mobile food pantries throughout the state. During this time my team & I hit many barriers including bureaucracy from local, state and federal representatives including other

Non-profits that explained to me that I was unqualified to do my job because I do not have a Masters Degree, or PHD.

I am currently an undergraduate student at Portland State University majoring in Indigenous Nations, where I will continue to pursue my Masters degree in Public policy, Public Health and/or Social Work in order to create change for equitable food policies at state and federal levels.

Now that I am in school full time, I have seen first hand that many of my fellow students are either food insecure, or missing meals, with some experiencing hunger in order to pay their housing and other expenses including tuition, transportation, healthcare. SNAP benefits do not take in account of these other expenses as I stated above.

Unfortunately many students do not understand that they are experiencing food insecurity, or even know about SNAP, or other resources that may assist them, in my own research & experience, many may only qualify for \$23/month of SNAP benefits, because FAFSA loans and grants are considered an income, including disability, though these benefits are used to pay for rent, tuition, textbooks and healthcare.

Many that I have spoken to, believe that this is the journey of pursuing a higher education. I am asking for your support today to help all of us pursue a hunger free higher education.

Thank you for your time, and we hope that students can count on your support of HB 3089.