

February 19, 2025

TO: House Committee on Education
FROM: Lily Meadow, Our Children Oregon
SUBJECT: Support for HB 3435

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair McIntire, Vice-Chair Dobson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lily Meadow, and I am a Data & Research Intern at Our Children Oregon (OCO). I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3435, School Meals for All. As a top priority of the 2025 Children's Agenda, this bill has a broad backing of support, as it would ensure that every Oregon kid has access to the food and nutrition they need at school, regardless of their family's income or where they live.

This issue resonates deeply with me, both professionally and personally. I grew up in a single parent household, and I saw firsthand the struggle my mother faced trying to provide for me and my two brothers. There were times when we didn't have food, and mornings would start with a rushed, incomplete breakfast or none at all. While we were fortunate enough to be able to pay for lunches, it was often a struggle – and I knew many kids who weren't as fortunate. I still remember the feeling of hunger and the distraction it caused in the classroom. I don't want any child to go through that experience. Hunger shouldn't stand in the way of a child's education or well being.

School Meals for All is not just about feeding kids. It's about supporting their academic achievement, mental health, and overall well-being. When

students are able to focus on learning rather than on their next meal, they are more likely to succeed. Ensuring that all children have access to free, nutritious meals will enhance their well-being and provide every child the opportunity to thrive.

I urge you to support HB 3435 and ensure that every Oregon child has the food and nutrition they need to succeed in school.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Lily Meadow
Data & Research Intern
Our Children Oregon

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