

Submitter: Claire Catt  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3435

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

My name is Claire Catt, executive director at United Way of Columbia County. United Way of Columbia County is in strong support of House Bill 3435, School Meals for All, which would ensure that every Oregon kid has the food they need at school, regardless of where they live in the state or how much money their parents make.

United Way of Columbia County is dedicated to working to meet the needs of vulnerable families in our region, where 1 in 6 children is currently facing food insecurity.

School Meals for All would ensure every child has access to nutritious meals, thereby enhancing students' well-being and academic success. This policy is a critical step toward addressing hunger and leveling the playing field for all students.

School Meals for All not only helps students but also strengthens our communities. By providing meals to every student, we remove the stigma around free meals and ensure no child is left behind. Additionally, this policy supports local farmers by incorporating Oregon-grown ingredients into school meals and creates good-paying jobs for skilled workers. It's a win-win for our children, our economy, and our future.

In Oregon, we believe in taking care of one another and ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed. That's why I urge the Oregon legislature to pass and fully fund School Meals for All.

Claire Catt,  
Executive Director, United Way of Columbia County