

My name is Rebecca Battin, Director of Policy and Legal Services at Pacific Refugee Support Group (PRSG). PRSG is in **strong support of Senate Bill 611**, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure Youth and Elderly Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep themselves and their families healthy.

PRSG strongly supports Food for All Oregonians because, as an immigrant and refugee direct service organization, we are responders to the felt effects of hunger insecurity on our most vulnerable neighbors. PRSG works in both the Portland Metro Area and in Eugene to serve the broader Southern Oregon immigrant community. In both areas, we often work with very young parents and their children who have recently arrived and are still learning about and acclimating to life in Oregon and in the United States. These children are often facing housing insecurity or are unhoused and adding the additional layer of food insecurity onto their situation has horrible, life-long ramifications.

We work with these children and young families to connect them to all existing food resources, including OFB food pantries, SNAP (for the limited number who are eligible) and more. But our food pantries are running out of food, and the existing resources can't support the growing number of food insecure Oregonians.

Food security and access, when available to them, is one less thing immigrant Oregonian families have to worry about in the long list of steps needed to become stable and prosperous in the US, such as completing work authorization and other immigration applications, finding employment, degree translations from their foreign equivalents, securing stable housing, enrolling children in school, accessing and navigating the US healthcare system, and so much more. Food security is a crucial building block for immigrant Oregonians to become stable and thrive in their communities. When children, especially, don't have access to food we see the countless problems that develop as a result. Our team sees these families turning to our emergency rooms, public schools, street response teams, non-profits, and other areas for food assistance that simply isn't currently available in our state.

Food should be a right of all regardless of where they were born, especially in a country that wastes so much. We see the benefit to immigrant families when food security is a reality for their children: better health outcomes and less reliance on emergency health resources, better performance in school, higher job retention for parents, improved mental and behavioral health, and more. These benefits help all of us in the state, not just those who directly receive the support. When our most vulnerable neighbors are stable, we all become more stable. When our vulnerable communities are given the

foundation to become resilient and prosperous, we become more resilient and prosperous as a community, together.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I, again, strongly urge support of SB 611.