

Submitter: Peter Addy
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611
TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing 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 them and their families healthy.

Oregon is in the grip of a severe hunger crisis, a situation that demands our immediate attention. Shockingly, 1 in 6 children in Oregon are currently struggling with food insecurity, and the number of Oregonians facing hunger has increased by one-third since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Food pantries, including the Oregon Food Bank, are grappling with unprecedented levels of demand, a situation never before witnessed in their 40+ years of operation.

Despite paying billions in annual taxes in Oregon, immigrant Oregonians are twice as likely to face hunger and poverty in our state. Thousands of immigrant and refugee Oregonians are excluded from vital food assistance due to their immigration status.

These are our neighbors, family, friends, children our kids play with, coworkers, and loved ones– the people who help make Oregon a beautiful place to live. Access to food should not depend on where we were born. I urge you to envision an Oregon where anyone who needs food can get it.

Food for All Oregonians (SB 611) will allow low-income Youth and elderly Oregonians to access the grocery benefits they need to thrive. SNAP currently excludes these Youth and Elders solely due to immigration status. Food for All will build on successful, community-driven navigator models to ensure trust and community safety.

When everyone in our community has access to food, we all thrive. Children perform better in school, our families' health and well-being improve, and our local businesses receive vital support, thereby boosting our economy. This is not just a rural or urban issue, but a collective concern that affects every corner of Oregon. When all our neighbors have the food they need, Oregon flourishes.

I am deeply grateful for the time and consideration you are giving to this crucial issue.

Your YES vote on SB 611 would be a significant step towards ensuring food security for all Oregonians. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Peter Addy
Portland, Oregon