

Submitter: Caleb Butler
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

My name is Caleb Butler and I wanted to thank all of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to come and talk about the importance of supporting Food For All Oregonians, Senate Bill 611.

Often when we think about people who are in need, we generalize and don't think of specific names or faces. The reality is that our friends, and neighbors need our help. Single parents with families, immigrants,, and refugees often struggle to put food on the table.

Growing up, my Mother worked full-time and put herself through college. She was the first in an Italian American family that had immigrated two generations prior to graduate from college. While this is a typical success story, what frequently is missed is the limited resources that come about. Many times, families are able to get by on limited resources, but this is a struggle that we can do something about. Imagine a world where all American citizens, regardless of immigration status were able to have their needs met. Not only would this mean an increase economically, but it would also represent an increase in community. When people are fed they are able to contribute more to society.

During my time working with a food pantry, I was alarmed to find the huge increase of people in need. As someone who grew up living paycheck to paycheck and often unable to have basic necessities, I understand firsthand the importance of compassion from strangers. Food is a Human Right. Our freedom, our health, our ability to thrive all depend on access to food that is nutritious and culturally familiar.

Providing food addresses the issues of today, but what is also needed is a solution to the root causes of hunger.

When we forcefully limit resources for those in need, we limit ourselves. We limit ourselves from Americans that will go on to contribute greatly to America's well-being. Our nation was founded upon immigration, by focusing on "America first," we are neglecting the greatest Americans, those who give up everything to come in take part in the dream that we all share together. I urge you to include Food for All Oregonians, Senate Bill 611 in the state's budget. You have the power to help our communities thrive. Thank you for your time.