

Submitter: Thomas Karwaki
On Behalf Of: St Johns Food Share
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

House Bill 5006 - Ways & Means Committee March 22,2025
Thomas Karwaki - Representing St Johns Food Share Inc.

My name is Thomas Karwaki and I am the Treasurer of and speaking for St Johns Food Share's Board.

St. Johns Food Share is an all-volunteer food pantry providing 1.2 Million pounds of food in 2024 to over 5,000 persons each month.

This morning, I will help you spend money, save money, and save lives.

Hunger does not respect national borders, age, race, or political party.

Spending Money-

HB 5006 funds the Emergency Board. Please keep the Board in your thoughts and prayers – they will need them and more money.

Saving Money --

Food is a medicine. Oregon Health Plan recipients need food to stay healthy and to recover. St Johns Food Share works with Legacy Emanuel Hospital to provide food to patients returning home.

This nutritious food helps their recovery – and sometimes allows for earlier release.

Saving Lives –

Oregon's food banks are like the Emergency Room. The place where a person goes who doesn't have options. The problem is Food Supply.

Every day that St Johns Food Share is open (3 days/week) – the doors close and there is literally no food left. The shelves, freezers, refrigerators are bare.

In January when someone smashed our glass door in – they could only find a pound of chicken and water. Thanks media for covering this story.

How would you feel if you had to come home each day to prepare a meal for 500 and the shelves are bare?

This week the White House stopped over 1 million pounds of food from coming to Oregon. It cut the supply of food to Oregon Food Bank by over 25% for 2025.

YOU CAN HELP. Each of you are influential community leaders. You can help by:

- 1) Talking to your colleagues and local public officials – make it clear hunger – and providing food is important to you.
- 2) Talking with the corporate lobbyists for retailers and food manufacturers -- ask them what are they doing to reduce hunger.

Ask to see their Fresh Alliance reports for your district.(Fresh Alliance is how large and medium size firms donate to food banks). If you ask for the reports – the donations will increase.

- 3) Meeting and visiting the food banks in your district. Ask what are their needs

and how you can help.

- 4) Include hunger and food banks when talking to community groups in your district and town halls. If you say it is important -your constituents will listen.
- 5) Help at food banks and shelters – live your values. Bring the whole family.

These are all actions that you can take that are FREE.

But please also consider Food For All Oregonians. Because hunger knows no borders, age, race or political party.

Thank you.