

Submitter: Amber Kern Johnson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Testimony in Support of HB 5006

My name is Amber Kern Johnson, and I am the Executive Director of the Community for Positive Aging (CfPA) (founded as the Hollywood Senior Center), a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering a healthier, more inclusive, and connected community for older adults in Oregon. For over 50 years, we have worked to improve food security, health equity, disaster preparedness, and community resilience—particularly for low-income seniors, BIPOC communities, and those with disabilities.

I am writing today on behalf of the Community for Positive Aging (CfPA) in strong support of HB 5006, which would provide a critical funding stream to sustain and expand food pantry services that so many Oregonians rely on.

Food insecurity among older adults is a growing crisis. In our work at CfPA, we see firsthand how many seniors are forced to make impossible choices between food, medication, and housing costs. Many live on fixed incomes that cannot keep pace with rising grocery prices, and for those with mobility challenges, simply accessing fresh and nutritious food can be a daunting task.

Our organization operates multiple food security programs, including culturally specific food pantries and grocery delivery services that support low-income and homebound seniors. These programs not only provide essential nutrition but also serve as lifelines that reduce isolation and connect participants to additional services. The demand for these services continues to grow, yet funding remains a constant challenge.

HB 5006 is essential to ensuring that food pantries and community-based food programs across Oregon can continue meeting this urgent need. Without sustained funding, thousands of vulnerable Oregonians—including older adults, people with disabilities, and families struggling with economic hardship—will face even greater barriers to accessing nutritious food.

Food is a basic human right. By passing HB 5006, Oregon can take a meaningful step toward ensuring that no one in our state goes hungry—especially those who have contributed to our communities for decades and deserve to age with dignity.

I urge you to support this critical legislation and invest in the health and well-being of Oregonians facing food insecurity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amber Kern Johnson

Executive Director, Community for Positive Aging (CfPA)