



February 4, 2026

Re: Yes on SB 1581

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Michelle Glass, and I submit this testimony on behalf of SO Health-E, the Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition. **We strongly support SB 1581, School Meals for All.**

SO Health-E works closely with communities across Southern Oregon to identify the issues most impacting family well-being. Since 2022, food security has consistently ranked among the top three concerns raised by our members. Right now, the cost of living is one of the most urgent challenges families are facing, with food prices placing increasing strain on household budgets. Universal school meals help ease this pressure while ensuring children's basic needs are met.

In rural communities across our region, school meals are often one of the most reliable sources of daily nutrition for children. SB 1581 helps ensure that students can focus on learning rather than worrying about whether they will have enough to eat.

We are especially encouraged that SB 1581 supports breakfast access after the start of the school day. Transportation challenges, long bus routes, and family work schedules often prevent students from arriving early enough to eat. Allowing breakfast to be served in the classroom and counted as instructional time helps meet students where they are, without sacrificing learning time.

SB 1581 also reduces administrative burdens for schools by eliminating meal applications, income verification, and unpaid meal debt collection. Just as importantly, it removes stigma and protects students from meal shaming. Universal meals create school environments grounded in dignity, equity, and inclusion, where no child is singled out based on their family's financial situation.

Research and our members' lived experiences show that when students have reliable access to nutritious food, it makes a difference for learning. Over time, these benefits contribute to improved health outcomes and reduced public costs related to healthcare and social services. School meals are not just a nutrition policy; they are a smart, preventative investment in Oregon's future.



SO Health-E

Advocating for Health Equity

With only a small number of schools remaining before Oregon can become a Hunger-Free Schools state, SB 1581 represents an opportunity to finish the job and ensure no child in Oregon goes hungry at school.

We urge you to vote YES on SB 1581 and advance a policy that supports students, families, and communities across our state.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

Michelle Glass
Policy Strategist,
SO Health-E, the Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition