

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

My name is Mary Carman, and I live in Tualatin, Oregon. I am submitting testimony in strong support of **SB 1581: School Meals for All**.

SB 1581 ensures that every student can access breakfast and lunch at school at no cost, regardless of income. This is a critical step to addressing hunger during an affordability crisis and ensuring that students can focus on learning rather than worrying about food.

I am especially encouraged that **SB 1581** makes breakfast accessible after the start of the school day, recognizing that many students arrive late due to transportation barriers or family work schedules. Allowing breakfast to be served in the classroom and counted as instructional time ensures students are nourished without losing valuable learning time.

The bill also reduces administrative burdens for schools by eliminating meal applications, income verification, and unpaid meal debt collection. Just as importantly, it protects students from stigma and meal shaming, helping create school environments rooted in dignity, equity, and inclusion.

Because my home is nearly on the border between Tualatin and Sherwood, I vote in the Sherwood School District. It is one of very few across the entire state that does not fully participate in the universal meals program, and I am dismayed that only the Title I school has access. It is crucial that children from all socioeconomic backgrounds have access to free, nutritious meals every day.

As an employee of Oregon Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the full effects this administration has had on residents of Oregon. I, myself, am an immigrant and fear for my safety on a regular basis. And while I believe all of these support systems should have been in place long before any administration made sweeping decisions that impact our communities, the next best time to instill them is now. Our children need food. Period.

Research and lived experience consistently show that when students have reliable access to nutritious food, schools see improved attendance, fewer disciplinary incidents, and stronger academic outcomes. **SB 1581** is a smart investment in Oregon's students and our future.

With only a small number of schools remaining before Oregon becomes a Hunger-Free Schools state, I urge you to vote **YES** on **SB 1581** and ensure that no child in Oregon goes hungry at school.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Respectfully,

Mary Carman
Tualatin, Oregon
Oregon Food Bank