



Date: February 3, 2026

To: Senate Committee On Education

From: Enrique Farrera, President Oregon Education Association

Subject: SB 1581

Students Cannot Learn if They Are Hungry

My name is Enrique Farerra I am proud to serve as President of the Oregon Education Association which represents over 42,000 educators across the state of Oregon. In my day job I am an Academic Advisor at Clackamas Community College. I am here to support SB 1581, requiring school districts to offer lunch and breakfast to students at no charge, regardless of income.

The Oregon Education Association represents over 42,000 educators across the state of Oregon. Membership of our union spans every aspect of education. We represent educators from pre-kindergarten, K-12 and Community colleges. These members have diverse roles from licensed teachers and specialists, classified/education support professionals (ESPs), community college faculty, bus drivers, school nurses, counselors and more. In short, our members are the ones who ensure students arrive at school safely, are fed, supported in crisis, teach in front of classrooms, and work in difficult conditions to support students and our communities every day.

Last fall as we heard legislative staff analyze and share overviews of the devastating impacts of the HR 1 the federal budget bill that give tax breaks to the wealthy and corporations, we learned that Oregon has 162,215 children directly certified for free meals through SNAP. School meals are more than a budget line item. They are lifelines that help students learn and grow. Hunger in public schools is a real problem, and it is heartbreaking. Children cannot learn if they are hungry.

OEA members voted to endorse the Immigrant Rights Justice Package that this legislation is a part of. Every student deserves to feel safe and welcomed at school, and we must remember that school is often the place that students and families can rely on for consistent nutrition. Please support Oregon students with SB 1581.