

**Emerson Levy**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
House District 53



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Thursday, February 5, 2026

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Emerson Levy, and I am proud to represent HD 53 in the Oregon Legislature. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this morning about my support for SB 1581.

In central Oregon, rising costs have made it harder for many households to consistently meet basic needs, including food. About 13% of children in Deschutes County experience food insecurity, meaning they do not always have reliable access to enough nutritious food. Many of these families do not qualify for traditional assistance programs. These are working families, parents employed in tourism, construction, education, and service industries, who are doing their best, yet still struggling as housing and grocery costs continue to rise.

In the Bend-La Pine School District, all schools currently qualify for the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), meaning every student receives free breakfast and lunch each school day without application.

Our schools are reporting that when meals are universally available, participation increases, and stigma disappears. Students eat, teachers teach, and families have one less thing to worry about. But access to food shouldn't depend on whether a district qualifies for a particular program or whether federal policy shifts.

SB 1581 represents stability, fairness, and common sense. It supports working parents, strengthens schools, and ensures that students are ready to learn when they walk into the classroom.

I urge your support for SB 1581. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Emerson Levy  
State Representative, HD53