



TO: Senate Education Committee
FROM: PCUN
SUBJECT: Support SB 1581 – School Meals for All

February 5, 2026

Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cynthia Ramirez, and I am a Policy Associate with PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and Latinx working families to improve their working and living conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy. I am writing on behalf of PCUN in support of SB 1581, School Meals for All.

At PCUN, we believe food is a human right and that everyone should have access to food regardless of income or status. However, our communities are excluded from food assistance programs due to immigration status despite contributing billions of dollars to Oregon's economy. Families are stretched thin between paying rent, utilities, transportation, and other basic necessities to the point where they are having to sacrifice on one or several of these basic needs in order to simply stay financially afloat. Food insecurity is widespread among farmworker families, who are among the poorest workers in the state earning an average of \$34,500 annually. For these families, SB 1581 would be a lifeline and provide a benefit to the children incomparable to its fiscal cost.

SB 1581 ensures that every student can access breakfast and lunch at school at no cost, regardless of income or status. 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. 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, on behalf of PCUN and our members, we urge you to support SB 1581, School Meals for All, because no child in Oregon should leave school with an empty stomach.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Ramirez
Policy Associate
PCUN