

TO: Senate Education Committee
FROM: Cynthia Ramirez
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. I reside in House District 17 and Senate District 9. I am writing in strong support of HB 1581, School Meals for All.

Having personally grown up here in Salem, Oregon, I know firsthand the countless benefits that SB 1581 would provide to students across the state. Coming from a low-income family, I was a recipient of free school lunches. Both of my parents worked tirelessly to provide for me and my three siblings, and their long working hours made it near impossible to find time to prepare both breakfast and lunch for all of us before school. Even in the summer, the school lunch program saved my family an indispensable amount of time and money that allowed us to stay afloat.

Despite the advantages of free school lunches, my personal experience in utilizing the resource came with a lot of shame and stigma. I constantly felt judged and targeted in accepting this basic human right, noting which of my peers came from a low income background like me and which did not. The school lunch program as I experienced it became an unintentional invasion of privacy, giving other students access into my family's financial well-being. SB 1581 would help future generations to avoid this uncomfortable experience.

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.

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.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Ramirez

