

Submitter: Matisse Swanson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4117

Hello Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee,
My name is Matisse Swanson, and I am here as the founder of WashCoFoodBloc and a volunteer with the Hillsboro United Mutual Aid Network(HUMAN). I am testifying today in support of HB 4117.

HUMAN was created in response to the immigration crisis our community is facing. A group of caring, committed Hillsboro residents came together to support Latino families impacted by recent enforcement actions. While we began as a Hillsboro-focused effort, the need quickly expanded, and we now support families across Washington County.

Since our inception in October 2025, HUMAN has provided groceries to more than 500 families, helped keep 15 families housed, and distributed over \$9,000 in direct aid through grassroots, community-powered efforts.

We are proud of what we have accomplished, but I want to be honest about the challenges. Our organization is entirely volunteer-run. Many of us are putting in 20 to 30 hours a week—on top of full-time jobs and family responsibilities—delivering groceries, collecting donations, coordinating housing support, and raising funds for rental assistance. This work is emotionally heavy. Volunteers experience burnout and secondary trauma from being on the front lines with families who are scared, grieving, or suddenly without a breadwinner.

We want to support every family affected by ICE actions, but the reality is that our capacity is limited. We cannot meet every need. We cannot replace a lost income. We cannot provide long-term stability. And it is heartbreaking to know that families are falling through the cracks simply because community volunteers cannot stretch any further.

Our story is just one example of what mutual aid groups across the region have been facing for months. Community members are doing everything they can—but we are not a substitute for state-level support.

This is where HB 4117 becomes essential. The proposed \$5 million would go a long way toward helping immigrant families who have been separated, destabilized, or left without a primary wage earner due to detainment. Cities within Washington County—and the county itself—have already declared states of emergency and allocated local funds. But local governments cannot shoulder this alone. It is time for the state to step in and provide meaningful relief.

These families are not criminals. Their racial or ethnic identity does not make them criminals. What many of them are experiencing is unjust, and while there may be disagreement about how to address the harm of federal immigration enforcement, one thing we can agree on is that Oregon families deserve stability, dignity, and support in moments of crisis.

Providing financial relief is a concrete, immediate step the state can take to prevent homelessness, hunger, and long-term harm. HB 4117 is an opportunity to show our immigrant communities that Oregon sees them, values them, and will not abandon them.

For these reasons, I strongly support HB 4117 and ask you to vote yes for this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.