



February 27, 2019

Co-Chairs Wagner and Smith, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of OR, we respectfully request your support of House Bill 5001 and the work of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions.

The Advocacy Commissions provide a critical service to the citizens of Oregon. They intrinsically highlight the strengths and challenges of the populations they represent. They primarily do so by providing a public forum for these populations to identify their successes and concerns, and thereby link them to the wider Oregonian community.

Collaboration is a key value for the Commissions. Abiding by this value serves to bring people together in a positive and respectful manner. This approach is particularly important because the populations they serve are often seriously under-represented and misunderstood. The process of information gathering and policy making undertaken by the Commissions is a two way street – the populations they represent speak their truth and open pathways to mutual understanding, and vice versa.

Because the Commissions are able to identify issues that are helpful, or counterproductive, to the populations they represent, they are also uniquely well qualified to advocate on behalf of legislative and policy initiatives. This is important work. As such, we urge the Committee to fund the Research and Policy Analyst position currently held by Dr. Connie Kim-Gervey at a permanent full, rather than part-time, level. She does excellent work for the Commission, which also speaks well for the ability of the Commission members and staff to choose excellent candidates to fill this post.

Increased funding for the Advocacy Commissions will be in the service of a better Oregon and constitute money truly well spent.

Respectfully,

Trish Garner

*State Public Policy Chair, American Association of University Women of OR*

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