



Oregon House of Representatives
House Committee on Business and Labor
Hearing on HB 2998
March 13, 2019

Chair Barker, Vice Chair Barreto, Vice Chair Bynum and Members of the House Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2998 on behalf of PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. Our mission is to build a voice for farmworkers, and Latino working families by building strong communities, electoral organizing, and policy change at the state and national level.

PCUN is supportive of House Bill 2988 because this would remove the English language only requirement for documents related to business organizations that are submitting for filing to the Secretary of State. This requirement has created barriers and diminished opportunities for entrepreneurs with Limited-English-Proficiency.

Today, Oregon's Latino community makes up 12 percent of Oregon's population, and is the largest minority group in the state. Latino Immigrants, and our families have the highest rates of starting small businesses. Latino-owned businesses more than doubled from 6,000 businesses in 2002 to 15,500 in 2012.

¹ Our members value entrepreneurship, and the value of hard work. Many of these business owners, were farm workers themselves, and received a service from our worker center to eventually become members of PCUN's Union – decided to take a risk to better the lives of their families, and open landscaping companies, agribusinesses, office cleaning businesses, Real Estate companies, marketing companies, construction businesses and more.

One of our members, Benito Mendoza, Owner and Operator of Agribusiness LLC, and a PCUN member expressed how user-unfriendly the Secretary of State's website is for Spanish Speaking Small Business Owners.

Increased accessibility in the filing process will lead to the establishment of more small businesses in Oregon which signifies more tax revenue and employment. Based on estimates given to us by the Secretary of State Staff, the translation of filing forms could provide an addition of over 17,000 businesses per biennium. The Small Business Administration has found that the average minority owned business in Oregon hires seven employees.

¹ The Oregon Community Foundation. "Latinos in Oregon: Trends and Opportunities in a changing State". 2016: 18

PCUN strongly believes that all individuals, especially those with Limited English Proficiency deserve access to entrepreneurship and financial opportunity. We respectfully request the committee to support HB 2998.

Thank you for your consideration,

Martha Sonato
Political Director
PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union