



House Committee on Rules  
Re: HB 3310

April 15, 2019

Chair Holvey, Vice Chair Williamson, Vice Chair Wilson, and Members of the Committee:  
Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 3310. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color.

The Coalition of Communities of Color is an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations with representation from the following communities of color: African, African American, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic. Our mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.

A healthy democracy relies on all voices being heard, with diverse voters having an equal chance at representation. HB 3310, the Oregon Voting Rights Act, would help us ensure that the voting systems for Oregon's school districts, education service districts, and community colleges align with the National Voting Rights Act, with every voter having the equal opportunity to elect the candidate of their choice.

For all students to succeed—including students of color who have been historically underserved—we need a diverse range of elected leaders. But as communities of color in Oregon have grown, the number of elected officials of color has not kept pace, as evidenced by the fact that seven out of the ten most diverse communities in Oregon have never had a person of color elected to their school board. For students of color, it is critical to have leaders in education who understand their needs and are connected to community. When we have elected leaders from a range of backgrounds, we can better identify solutions to the challenges facing our education systems and help close the opportunity gap.

The Oregon Voting Rights Act establishes a process that would help communities create the voting systems that work best for them, through a clear and collaborative process, helping ensure that every voice is heard. We encourage the committee to pass HB 3310 for a healthier democracy and to strengthen our education system. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 3310.

Sincerely,

Jenny Lee, Advocacy Director  
Coalition of Communities of Color

