

# OREGON LAW CENTER

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## Testimony in Support of House Bill 2015 Before the Joint Committee on Transportation

Co-Chair Beyer and Co-Chair McKeown, and members of the committee:

My name is David Henretty. I am an attorney with the Oregon Law Center and I am here in support of HB 2015.

The Oregon Law Center helps low-income Oregonians with their civil legal problems, such as issues related to their homes, jobs, medical care, and physical safety. We have offices around the state, in Metro areas and rural communities. Our primary purpose is to help the families we serve to move out of poverty.

The Oregon Law Center seeks input from its client communities to figure out which types of problems are most important to them. We seek client input through things like focus groups and community surveys, and over the years immigrant families have consistently told us that the inability to get a drivers license is one of the biggest barriers to improving their economic situation.

Oregon is a large, and largely rural, state where public transit service is extremely limited or does not exist outside of the Metro areas. Even in places where public transit is available, service in the early morning, late at night, on weekends, and for inter-city or out-of-county trips for work, medical needs, shopping, recreation, or other purposes is limited or nonexistent.

For several years, I worked in Malheur County with families who lived and worked in remote communities and had to rely on driving for everything. These families included people who have lived and worked in Oregon for years, and many times they included U.S. citizen children whose parent could not obtain a drivers license solely because of their immigration status.

There are communities like that all over Oregon. Unfortunately, people who are unable to drive lawfully in Oregon suffer societal, economic, and health-related disadvantages in that they are deterred from driving to work, to shop,

to health care facilities, to school, or to places of worship, or to otherwise engage fully in their communities.

We believe HB 2015 will make it easier for Oregon families to access health care, education, and jobs – things that will improve the economic situation of immigrants and their families, as well as the community as a whole.

Thank you for your time and for your support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

David Henretty