



March 4, 2021

Chair Barbara Smith Warner
Vice-Chair Christine Drazan
Vice-Chair Paul Holvey
Members of the House Committee on Rules

RE: HB 2475 – Requires voter registration cards and electronic voter registration system to include option for person to identify race, ethnicity and preferred language of person.

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Drazan, Vice-Chair Holvey, and members of the House Committee on Rules:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2475, the Voter Access Act that will advance data equity in our Oregon. For the record, my name is Elona J Wilson, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations with representation from African, African American, Latinx, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic communities in Oregon.

The Coalition of Communities of Color's 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.

In the United States, the political process has marginalized many communities, including Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. . HB 2475 addresses this issue by enabling voters to self-identify and provide their race, ethnicity, and preferred language in the voter registration process.

CCC's member organizations serve diverse communities within our state and understands the value that self-identified race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation data has within community-based work. Our Research Justice Institute has engaged in years of work on data equity for communities of color, and enabling voters to self-identify aligns with our goal of using data for systemic change. The communities served are consistently undercounted in a variety of systems ranging from patient care to student population to the census, and with this bill, we have





an opportunity to remedy this deficiency in our electoral systems. Undercounting leads to continued disenfranchisement, and that is why HB 2475 is imperative to ensuring the strength and authenticity of our democracy.

This is a simple ask that will continue to be a leader in breaking down barriers to voting access and live up to our commitment, as a state, to equity and inclusion. It will also enable organizations like our members to better reach their communities to engage them in the electoral process.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I urge you to take action to strengthen our democracy and reinforce our commitment to equity and inclusion by supporting HB 2475.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elona J. Wilson".

Elona J Wilson
Advocacy Director
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