

GOVERNOR BARBARA ROBERTS

Testimony on House Bill 3110

I write this letter in strong support of House Bill 3110. Our Oregon businesses have had a long time to include women and people from underrepresented communities on their boards of directors. Some have taken that step, but the numbers are still unacceptably low.

HB 3110 is a step in the direction of ensuring that diversity is acted upon and made a reality. It is also limited to publicly traded boards having principal places of business in Oregon, so the bill's requirement will not have an undue impact on smaller businesses.

In a state where our voters have trusted women to currently hold the positions of Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and Labor Commissioner, there is clearly no shortage of fully prepared women to fill the needed corporate board positions required by HB3110.

As an active Oregon citizen, I, myself, have served on dozens of non-profit boards, hospital boards, school and community college boards, and national and regional boards such as Reinventing State Government and the Human Rights Campaign. Hundreds of women and members of underrepresented communities have similar backgrounds. Oregon has the talent.

Though it is quite usual for governors to be offered corporate board positions on their retirement, as a woman governor I was offered no such opportunity. That was also true of many other female governors across the country. That message seemed quite clear. Corporate boards did not welcome women members.

I believe the time has come for forward-thinking legislation like HB3110.

House Bill 3110 is good for business. It's good for our communities. It is important for our state. Just as government needs more voices at the decision-making table, so do our corporate leaders. I urge your "aye" votes on this important bill.

Thank you for your attention. Governor Barbara Roberts