

March 10, 2021

To: Chair and House Democratic Leader Barbara Smith Warner, Vice Chair and House Republican Leader Drazan, Vice Chair Paul Holvey and Members of the Committee

I write this letter in strong support of House Bill 3110. This bill is a step forward in ensuring that diversity and gender balance in board leadership is acted upon and made a reality.

To give you an idea about why I'm sending you this testimony in support of HB 3110, I am an executive revenue leader with more than 25 years of experience in sales and business development. I have been successful at building and leading businesses at the intersection of technology and education, SaaS and services. Over the last decade I have been the revenue leader for several private-equity backed EdTech companies, including two private-equity backed companies culminating in successful exits. I am a limited partner in the Oregon Venture Fund, and is a board director at Megh Computing, an OVF portfolio company. I live in Portland.

This bill is a win for corporations, women and individuals from underrepresented communities. Women and individuals from underrepresented communities will be assured of joining other diverse voices at the highest level of corporate governance. They will serve as models and mentors for others. Businesses benefit by receiving new perspectives and insights about their customer base and achieve better decisions through multiple views. Research has clearly shown that businesses with diverse boards are rewarded with better bottom-line performances. Further, organizations such as Goldman Sachs Group Inc. last year said it wouldn't underwrite public offerings for any companies that lack a diverse board after July 1, 2020. Diversity is classified to include gender, race, ethnicity or LGBTQ identity. After July 1 of this year, the requirement will increase to two members with a diverse background, one of whom must be a woman (Bloomberg). Oregon has a chance to be a state leading these initiatives in a progressive, thoughtful fashion.

As recently as 2018, 61% of Fortune 100 boards were comprised of white men, 19% white women, 6% minority women, and 14% minority men. Oregon's largest publicly traded companies show an average of only 21% of board seats were held by women in 2019. Women represent 50% of our population; women and minorities are severely underrepresented at the board level.

Oregon has an opportunity to join a national trend by requiring corporate board diversity. Twelve states have passed or are considering the passage of similar legislation. These initiatives have had impact as evidenced by the shift in board composition in California-based companies after legislation passed in 2018 that mandating that most companies based there have at least one woman on their boards by the end of 2019, and three women by the end of this year (Bloomberg).

Oregon-based companies have an opportunity to take the lead in endorsing the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion to their employees and all the citizens of Oregon.

Thank you,

Jill Hedrick