

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
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House Committee on Rules
Testimony in Support of HB 2337
March 23, 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chair Drazan and Vice-Chair Paul Holvey, and Members Bonham, Fahey, Salinas, and Zika,

My name is Linda Castillo. I am Chair of the State of Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs. I am in support of HB 2337.

Consistent, correct and clear data is a powerful driver for service improvement, policy development, and equitable change. Currently, we do not have sufficient or correct information on our diverse racial, cultural and linguistic communities. This quantitative data along with the qualitative data provided by our culturally specific community based organization and providers are fundamental elements for powerful analysis and advocacy. Too often we have found that no, insufficient, or incorrect data has been collected on our BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee communities resulting in inadequate data to inform resource and service decisions. This inequity results in insufficient allocations of resources, inadequate service provision and an inability to target needed services and resources as a baseline and in times of crisis. This has never been more evident than in our current Covid and mental health crisis. The State's inability to have the exact demographics of our populations by language (Spanish and indigenous Meso-American languages), by racial and ethnic demographics, and by multi-ethnicities has cost lives and opportunities for essential targeted interventions. While the REALD is an effort to increase and standardize race, ethnicity, language, and disability, it does not serve our vulnerable communities if it is not done, done incorrectly, or done inconsistently by programs and providers. Every bit of data we gather helps us improve our services levels, types of services, what language specific providers we need, how much resource we will need, and ultimately raises the bar on our health equity profile throughout Oregon's various regions. We have much work to do. In all regions, our CCOs must be held to a higher standard and an audit will help identify strengths and opportunities for equitable service development, outreach, engagement, and culturally responsive service and provider provision for our BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee populations.

The OACO is an ideal partner in this data raising efforts in that we have collaborative relationships with community-based organizations and can convene community members to elevate, discuss, and research the specific issues of community concern. From these affinity groups, we can utilize this information to develop and inform recommendations for service models and funding allocations. We have already piloted such a model, which culminated in our recently released report, [*Crisis de Nuestro Bienestar*](#) (Crisis of our Well-being). In this first ever report of its kind, we have married best practice community informed research and fundamental

data elements to provide specific policy and implementation recommendations. What we learned through this best practice model and process is how essential it is to elevate community concerns, needs, and solutions. Additionally, we have learned that OACO requires more resources than it currently has to sustain and capacitate these critical and crucial efforts to raise the voices of vulnerable communities and our communities of color.

Thank you for your time and know we are looking forward to our continuing partnership as equity accomplices and drivers of change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Castillo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter being a large, stylized capital 'L'.

Linda Castillo
OCHA Chair