

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
“Advocating Equality and Diversity”
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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 Marisa Salinas and I am a member of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA). Racism is a public health crisis. It directly impacts the mental and physical health of individuals and entire communities. As a person of mixed race and ethnicity, I can speak first-hand of how racism has impacted me and my family. The hours spent processing sadness, feelings of hopelessness, anger and sometimes even emptiness is a small range of impact racism has on an individual’s mental health. The range of headaches, migraines, high blood pressure, etc., while sometimes genetic or pre-dispositioned, are augmented by the emotional impact of experiencing racism and systemic racism.

We are a society that wants to see things that are intangible and have trouble understanding. We also strive to see results when we want change. Providing a tangible result, data, will be an instrumental tool for the State to understand our current baseline and plan for effective and positive change.

In addition to having data, mobile providers that reflect and understand the cultural and linguistic background of the groups to be served is an important factor in getting needed services to communities. Trust and understanding is paramount to the relationship need for individuals accessing service. This also requires the community’s participation. Traditional approaches typically involve some form of the dominant culture planning or executing a plan with the community as ancillary. Progress requires that the community play an equal role in the delivery of services. In addition, there must be appropriate

access for individuals in their languages to be informed of how the providers are performing and whether or not their needs are being met.

Also, when it comes to monitoring progress OACO has existed for years as the focus in the state for communities of color to analyze and seek solutions for communities in the State of Oregon. OACO is the most appropriate agency to discuss, research, and make recommendations allocating resources for improving health inequities.

Finally, when starting the battle against this public issue, racial health equity must be reviewed for each bill that advances in the legislature. The Legislative Equity Office is the most appropriate representative to conduct this review. In addition, a position as an Equity Coordinator is necessary to ensure access and information for the communities to the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marisa Salinas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marisa Salinas
Commissioner