

June 10, 2021

**Testimony of Leland Baxter-Neal, Director of Advocacy
In Support of HB 2819
Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures**

Dear Co-Chair Nathanson, Co-Chair Burdick, Vice Co-Chair Boquist, Vice Co-Chair Reschke, Vice Co-Chair Pham, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2819: Leave No Worker Behind.

Latino Network is a culturally specific nonprofit serving Latinx youth and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Our organization provides transformative services to more than 8,000 Latinx youth, families, and community members in multiple areas including education, family stability, housing support, juvenile justice, legal navigation, and advocacy.

Latino Network strongly believes all workers, no matter our place of origin, should be able to earn enough to care for our families. We have seen that, across the communities we serve, many families depend on breadwinners who work jobs that simply do not pay enough. It is an unfortunate truth that many jobs pay too little for workers to make ends meet and support their families. The goal of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is to strengthen the economic stability of workers by raising their take-home pay, helping their families pay for essentials.

In our advocacy, Latino Network works to dismantle exclusionary policies that marginalize the Latinx community. Our communities are disproportionately impacted by inequitable conditions that result in disparate opportunities based on an individual's immigration status. Under current policy, the EITC is denied to *everyone* in a household if just one member files their taxes with an ITIN.

Passing HB 2819 means that 90,000 U.S. citizens living in mixed-status households in Oregon will benefit from the EITC, most of whom are children. HB 2819 supports the wellbeing of our communities by allowing all income-eligible workers in Oregon to claim the state's EITC, regardless of how they file their taxes.

Every day we hear stories from community members unable to make ends meet. The economic hardships faced by immigrant, refugee, Latinx and other communities of color have been exacerbated during this pandemic. The EITC currently excludes certain workers, many deemed essential, across agriculture, food processing, retail, and construction

sectors. These essential workers have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic due to racial inequities across the state. This includes 34,000 Oregon families—predominantly Latinx or Asian Americans—who file their taxes using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

We have an opportunity to protect the prosperity of our communities with HB 2819 and continue the work of making our state a more equitable and equal place to live.

We strongly urge you to support HB 2819. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leland Baxter-Neal
Latino Network
Director of Advocacy