



2/25/2021

House Committee on Rules

Testimony to support House Bill 2167

Chair and House Democrat Leader, Barbara Smith Warner, Vice-Chair and House Republic Leader Christine Drazen; Vice-Chair Paul Holvey, and Members of the Committee

PCUN, on behalf of our 6,000+ registered members, would like to express our enthusiastic support for House Bill 2167 which would Codify the Racial Justice Council (RJC), and create a permanent committee to have important conversations about Racial Equity in the great state of Oregon. As PCUN's Executive Director, I joined the RJC, and have spent countless hours volunteering as well on the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee. RJC is an important step in reforming our committee structures, and Oregonian's would be well served, to keep this council as a permanent structure as a vital advisory role for our communities.

PCUN was started by Mexican Immigrants, mostly from indigenous communities of Michoacan and Oaxaca in the 1980's - as a response to exploitation of indigenous immigrant farmworkers. Our organization today is a hybrid community, labor-union, and worker center; and due to institutional racism, and racism on the books today - we were excluded from collective bargaining rights that are given to most other sectors of the workforce in the United States.

As a life-long Oregonian, growing up in the Mid-Willamette Valley - where most of PCUN's supporters, and members reside - I experienced much of the inequities that the RJC focuses on addressing. My community was and still is one of the most vibrant and diverse communities in NE Salem, Oregon. Lack of investments in BIPOC students, health supports, small-businesses, affordable housing and workforce, meant an overinvestment in policing, and other outcomes that did not serve our community as a whole, instead was harmful to many people.

By codifying the Racial Justice Council, we will put into statute requirements for Governor's and state agencies to engage with BIPOC and Tribal communities as part of their budget development and legislative agendas; create connections between the RJC and it's committees with legislative champions to further the work of creating a racially just Oregon; and create a system to continue to support agencies in program development and implementation that is rooted in racial justice and moving Oregon to a place where a person's race no longer predicts their outcomes. Please support HB 2167and -1 amendments brought by the Governor's office. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Reyna Lopez  
RJC Councilor  
Executive Director, PCUN Oregon's Farmworker Union