

Testimony in support, HB 2361
House Committee on Behavioral Health
Monday, March 3, 2021, 8 am

Chair Rep. Sanchez, Vice-Chair Rep. Moore-Green, Vice Chair Rep. Nosse, and Representative Lively, Morgan, Reynolds, Salinas, Sollman, and Wright:

For the record, my name is Roberto Gamboa, I serve as a Director of Operations and Community Development for EUVALCREE. We are a community based organization that serves 8 counties in Eastern Oregon with a strong focus in Malheur, Umatilla, and Morrow counties. In my role, I also serve as the administrator for Eastern Oregon Health Equity Alliance, the Regional Health Equity Coalition of Eastern Oregon.

Today I am writing this letter in support of HB 2361. In working with Latinx and BIPOC communities in Eastern Oregon, there is a gap in the lack of culturally responsive behavioral and mental health providers and services. A primary cause of this is that there is not enough certified staff to support the growing demand our communities need. This bill will provide incentives for our community members to seek out these types of career options and increase the capacity to provide culturally specific mental and behavioral health services.

With HB 2361, I strongly believe that we can begin to pave the way for these counties to begin to increase in providers so that there are more options for our BIPOC and Latinx community members to receive the help they need that understands and is culturally responsive to their needs. These incentive programs could eliminate systems-based barriers that prevent our BIPOC and Latinx communities from accessing these vital services by increasing these counties' capacity to provide these services.

We thank you for time and committee for their positive consideration of HB 2361.

Sincerely,

Roberto Gamboa
Director of Operations and Community Development
Euvalcree