



Lee Po Cha, Executive Director

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4117. My name is Lee Po Cha, and I am speaking on behalf of IRCO, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, which engages Oregon's increasingly diverse communities in building new beginnings.

We support House Bill 4117 because the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) holds the potential to help individuals and families transition from poverty to self-sufficiency. This bill would support culturally specific and responsive community-based organizations, tribal governments, and rural communities to better assist their clients in accessing critical tax support and navigation resources.

Compared to the rest of the U.S. states, Oregon has traditionally been towards the bottom for access to the EITC. Governor Brown has recently made it a priority to modernize and improve EITC access and take-up rates. If Oregon were to increase its EITC take-up rate from its current 73.1 percent to the national average of 78.6 percent, low-income families would have access to \$27 million in EITC funds and \$5 million in Child Tax Credit Funds annually.

The impact of this bill will not be felt by communities of color unless community-based organizations with connections to the communities are given the capacity to spread the word. We understand that HB 4117 will fund new infrastructure through capacity grants, which will give community based organizations the chance to make that connection through tax preparation and tax navigation services.

IRCO has experience doing this hands-on work, but we also know that there are not enough resources to support organizations like us. HB 4117 could fill in that gap.

Every Oregon family eligible for these credits deserves access to free tax preparation and navigation resources so they can access these credits. IRCO urges your support for HB 4117.