



February 3, 2022

**Re: Support for HB 4099**

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the House Committee on Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 4099 to establish a state-level Racial Equity and Justice Youth Collaborative. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Deputy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations. Our mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice, and prosperity.

Students and youth should have the ability to shape their futures and serve as collaborative leaders in policymaking in the areas that affect their lives, including education and health. As state agencies work to operationalize their commitments to equity, we need a dedicated space that ensures the voices of youth and students are meaningfully heard. Our institutions were not designed to engage youth as co-leaders, and Oregon lacks a youth-led advisory body. Black, Indigenous, and other youth of color are further marginalized in these spaces.

Youth are experts in their own experience, and this legislation meets a need that we have heard frequently voiced by BIPOC youth. The concept was co-designed by youth and educators in recognition that involving those most impacted results in better policy. The Collaborative is also poised to serve as a complementary body to align with the work of the Governor's Racial Justice Council that has brought together critical stakeholders and advanced racial equity priorities across issue areas.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I ask that you support HB 4099 to support the leadership of youth and students in developing and implementing the policies that will shape their futures.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Lee", written in a cursive style.

Jenny Lee  
Deputy Director  
Coalition of Communities of Color