

House Committee on Human Services

Testimony in Support of HB 4122

February 2, 2022

Chair Williams, Vice-Chairs Ruiz & Scharf, and
Representatives Nelson, Noble, Owens, Schouten,

For the record, my name is Jonathan Chavez Baez. As Chair of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA), I want to take this opportunity to strongly encourage the committee to pass HB 4122 – Dreamers Belong Act – which removes significant financial barriers for DACA renewals.

1. OCHA works toward ensuring economic, social, political, and legal equity for Oregon’s Hispanic population. We do this through advocacy, public policy research, leadership development, and partnerships.

2. In our statutory role of bringing equity focus and community voice into Oregon policy making, OCHA strongly supports HB 4122.

OCHA acknowledges the economic devastation that COVID-19 and the wildfires have wreaked on the lives of countless Oregonians, including DACA recipients and their families. Dreamers are valuable investors in Oregon’s economy, contributing over \$38.5 million in state and local taxes, while having a spending power of \$331.7 million. From high school students to front line health care providers to teachers and policy advisors – Dreamers are a crucial part of our society. OCHA strongly supports HB 4122 and the grant relief it provides DACA recipients in renewing their status. Considering the recent hardships so many Oregonians have faced over the past three years, this act of kindness will allow these Dreamers to continue their paths uninterrupted.

HB 4122 addresses equity issues in the postsecondary educational attainment of Oregon youth who are DACA recipients and ensures that the next generation of the Oregonian workforce is given an equal opportunity to further their educational and, in turn, economic prospects, to the benefit of themselves, their families, their communities, and the state of Oregon as a whole.

**Oregon Commission
on Hispanic Affairs**

Chair:

Jonathan Chavez Baez

Vice-Chair:

Ashley Espinoza Valdez

Commissioners:

Irma Linda Castillo

Dr. Daniel López-Cevallos

Gustavo Morales

Josefina Riggs

Legislative Member:

Representative Andrea Salinas

**Oregon Advocacy Commissions
Office Staff**

Albert Lee, Executive Director

Nancy Kramer, Policy & Research

Dr. Kyl Myers, Public Affairs



For the thousands of Dreamers who call this state home and have invested millions of dollars into Oregon's economy, it is imperative that Oregon reinvests in this group of our neighbors, friends, teachers, and family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chair of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs

