



NAYA Action Fund

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To: Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business

RE: Senate Bill 1579 – Support

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Creena Bort, I am a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, and I represent the NAYA Action Fund located in Portland, OR. Founded by the community for the community, NAYA Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization with a mission to expand political advocacy and build electoral power in partnership with the Native community. The NAYA Action Fund provides tools to shape public policy, cultivate leadership, and elect champions for issues impacting Native people. Our vision of systemic change is youth-centered, family-driven, and elder guided. As active partners with the Oregon Economic Justice Roundtable, NAYA Action Fund is writing in strong support for the Equity Investment Act in SB_1579.

Serving an underrepresented population, we see the barriers Native American's and fellow members of the BIPOC community face when attempting to purchase homes, start a business, and thrive in the workforce. According to the 2019 Poverty in Multnomah County Report, only 30% of Portland's overall population identifies as person of color. Within that, we see 47% of those identifying as person of color living in poverty compared to those identifying as white sitting at 14%. We see our BIPOC community members struggle to reach their goals as they attempt to jump over the education barrier that leaves them at a disproportionately higher risk for unemployment, underemployment, and employment in low-wage sectors. The median household income sits at a staggering \$64,300 for those identifying as white, compared to \$28,709 for African American and \$40,750 for Native American.

Passing of SB_1579 will allow us to continue the work of supporting our culturally responsive programming. Funding allocated from this bill with help in our fight against overcoming barriers related to homeownership, workforce development, and will uplift our communities' entrepreneurs contributing to stronger generational wealth, asset building, and future successes. We urge your support of SB_1579.

Sincerely,
Creena Bort

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Creena Bort".

Policy and Advocacy Organizer

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