



Testimony in Support of SB 1579
Gloria Sandoval, Unite Oregon
February 8th, 2022

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 1579. My name is Gloria Sandoval and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Unite Oregon. Our organization is led by people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty, as we work across Oregon to build a unified intercultural movement for justice.

We are writing to offer support for Senate Bill 1579 because creating generational wealth equity for Oregon's most economically vulnerable communities is more than critical, it is overdue. The wealth gap was created by criminalizing and penalizing underrepresented communities for not being privileged in a system that was built on their backs. Closing this gap does not simply mean creating an equal playing field, but rather intentionally providing equitable support to repair the damage from the War on Drugs, over-policing, charging folks for dealing with poverty, and racism. The Equity Investment Act will help work towards this change by growing small businesses, giving workers access to developing new skill sets and increasing the number of homeowners.

This legislation is essential to creating wealth for generations to come. The Equity Investment fund will allocate \$50 Million to Business Oregon to provide grants to culturally-response, community-based organizations that support paths to homeownership, workforce development, and entrepreneurship. The people, the neighborhoods, and the communities most affected by systemic injustices, that is; Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities, should be the ones who are most centered in the creation of the Investment Equity Act and the first ones to be resourced and invested in.

Let's close the gap. Unite Oregon urges you to vote yes for Senate Bill 1579.

Sincerely,

Gloria Sandoval
Unite Oregon