

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

Testimony in Support of SB 1539

February 15, 2022

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Boquist, Senators Armitage,  
Findley, and Sollman,

My name is Daniel López-Cevallos, and I currently serve as Commissioner with the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA). I am submitting this written testimony in support of SB 1539 to improve and expand support services and access to education for houseless youth across our state.

OCHA is a catalyst that advocates for equitable policies and empowers partnerships between state government and Latina/o/x communities in rural and urban areas to ensure success for all Latinos by addressing issues at the policy level.

By providing funding to increase access to schools and improving academic achievement of houseless students, SB 1539 pilot program would make strides in addressing the many challenges houseless students and their families are facing. Houselessness is a serious issue for urban and rural Oregonians, particularly those from low-income, immigrant and communities of color. For instance, the three school districts with the largest houseless student populations (Beaverton – 1,871; Medford – 1,207; Salem-Keizer – 1,117) also have

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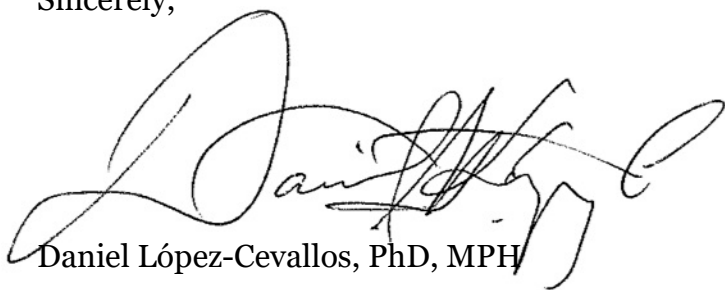


larger than average student of color populations (Beaverton – 58%; Medford – 36%; Salem-Keizer – 58%).<sup>123</sup>

While the pilot program will focus on seven school districts, it is our hope that the lessons learned are then applied to other school districts across the state. The 21,591 houseless students in Oregon (ODE, 2019-2020) deserve that our schools, districts and other partners at the local and state level do better to support their educational, housing, and overall well-being. As Governor McCall once said, "Quality of life is ...the caliber of our homes... and the provision of affirmative assistance to those who cannot assist themselves."

We appreciate your consideration and concerted effort to address this issue and welcome your consideration of SB 1539.

Sincerely,



Daniel López-Cevallos, PhD, MPH

Commissioner

Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/esea/mckinney-vento/pages/default.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/ESEA/McKinney-Vento/Documents/K-12%20District%20Totals%20percent%20of%20Enrollment%2019-20.xlsx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Student-Enrollment-Reports.aspx>

