

# Letter of Support

March 22, 2023



## Senate Bill 5525 Support Letter

Dear Oregon State Legislators,

My name is Kianna Juda Angelo. I am the founder and executive director of Living Islands Non-Profit, an NHPI-driven Pacific Islander Educational and Awareness Organization that has operated since 2013. Living Islands is a part of the Community Health Equity Coalition, which collectively responds to the public health needs of more than 500,000 minority Oregonians.

Part of our work centers around health issues for our underserved Micronesian communities here in Oregon. As a minority CBO, we see firsthand how public investment in health programs for minorities is not only a matter of social justice but can have a range of benefits that extend beyond the targeted population and can positively impact the health and well-being of the whole state.

With the support from the state, our organization has made incredible strides in informing, vaccinating, and supporting our Micronesian communities during the Pandemic. The Pandemic hit our Micronesian communities harder than any of us care to remember, and we keep in mind that without the support from the state, our communities would have witnessed an even harder, unbearable, and detrimental disaster. We appreciate every resource, fiscal and other, made available to us in our time of need. The Pandemic has shown us that the welfare of the State depends on the health of the State.

The Health Equity funding provided by the state this past year has also been instrumental in our work to shed light on the extent of tobacco and beetle nut usage in the Micronesian communities; data that up to now was non-existent in any level of government and private health sector. This lack of insight has effectively prevented the development of any meaningful prevention programs. Still, thanks to the funding, we are now forming an accurate picture of the usage in our community, which, unfortunately, shows significantly higher use of tobacco and beetle nut than previously expected. This pilot effort into our community mapping is now expanding into similar data projects in other health fields, such as diabetes and tuberculosis. While our communities are grateful for the opportunity to do this work, which has given us the tools to address our health issues properly, our work is far from complete.

We are imploring the state to continue this critical work and are in full support of SB 5525 and are requesting investments of \$286M above the current service level for the OHA Public Health Modernization Budget, including \$100M for direct support for CBOs like ours who is the direct connection between Oregon State and its most diverse and marginalized population groups.

Respectfully,

Kianna Juda Angelo  
Executive Director & Founder  
Living Islands Non-Profit