



March 23, 2023

Dear Chair Bynum, Vice Chairs Morgan and Nguyen, members of the House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business,

I'm writing on behalf of Juntos to submit neutral testimony for HB 3431. Juntos provides culturally specific navigation services to Latino/x/indigenous communities and we speak Spanish. Our navigation services include:

- Referral and coordination of substance use harm reduction services;
- Referral and coordination to medical detoxification centers;
- Referral and coordination to substance use treatment services;
- Referral and coordination to substance-free housing (sober housing);
- Referral Coordination of mentoring services and support groups (NA, AA, Alanon, etc.);
- System navigation and connection to community resources; and
- Under Measure 110 we are now able to provide linkage to behavioral health resource networks (BHRNs).

Our testimony is submitted as neutral because, while we support ongoing funding for the Economic Equity Investment Program, its current source of funding would have a grave impact on providers like myself working hard to provide culturally and linguistically-specific addiction recovery support to our communities. Our communities have suffered for so long, and thanks to Measure 110 funding we have finally been able to scale up operations and begin to meet this crisis with the urgency it demands.

HB 3431, were it to utilize an alternate funding source, could have strong, positive impacts on Oregon's communities of color. We must find ways to benefit the communities most harmed by systemic racism while also preserving vital funding for addiction recovery services. This is critical.

Funding HB 3431 by diverting Measure 110 dollars away from our programs would be detrimental to our work during a time when we're already faced with having to make some hard decisions. The latest cannabis tax revenue forecast shows a significant decrease in funds that will be available for future Measure 110 grant cycles; based on projected revenue, we're looking at a 25 percent cut. **We can't handle any more cuts to services. Our communities have suffered long enough.**

For my organization, losing Measure 110 funding would impact services for:

- Uninsured individuals;
- Latinx individuals and immigrants; and
- People that are on Medicare, since Medicare does not cover behavioral health services.

These people are part of our community. For years we have advocated for equity in behavioral health services for Black, Brown and Indigenous communities because members of these communities continue to die from preventable drug overdose deaths, are sent to jail, and all too often excluded from services because.

Then, once they surmount the many barriers to accessing care, they are all too often met with harsh treatment by providers who don't understand their culture or don't speak their language. Measure 110 is changing this by allowing culturally-specific providers to staff up, expand programs, create new programs, meet people where they're at, and connect them with vital services. They are more likely to listen to and trust us because we share their culture, heritage and language. Building connections and fostering trust with our clients is what ultimately creates a strong foundation for long-term recovery. Measure 110 is a small but integral part of the solution in giving our communities what they need to survive, then thrive.

On behalf of my organization and the primarily Latinx clients we serve, I urge you to identify an alternate funding source for HB 3431. Measure 110 is saving Black, Brown and Indigenous lives. We need to stay on track and focus on improving the lives of our Black, Brown and Indigenous citizens. We owe it to them because their lives are dependent on it.

Sincerely,

Jose Luis Garcia on behalf of Juntos