

Submitter: Thomas Busse  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB2951

This is a classic pork bill that is inadequate to addressing a structural problem. The bill appropriates half a million dollars to a single Mexican cultural center in Cornelius, Oregon - a city with a population of 11,869 with 3,400 households of which 68.61% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Although there is a legitimate public interest in ensuring non-English-speaking residents of Oregon receive adequate driver education, ODOT already maintains a comprehensive driver education and grant program. As things stand, Centro Cultural could compete for grant funding by making a direct application to ODOT's Driver Education Program - this would ensure the program is up to ODOT's standards. Centro Cultural provides good programs, and if the legislature wants to support its work, it should just provide operating grants and let Centro Cultural craft programs to meet community needs.

Historically, Oregon has subsidized under-18 education at the state level not to further a state interest, but to backfill program cuts at local school districts dating from the 1990's due to their reckless spending, and ODOT's Drive Education Advisory Committee's mission is limited "students under the age of 18." It is easy to understand how migrant farmworkers over age 18 can be bypassed by the system - but this is a statewide problem not limited to the city of Cornelius.

I urge the legislature take a more comprehensive approach rather than playing favorites.