



May 18th, 2023

Co-Chair McLain & Fredrick, Co-Vice Chairs Boquist & Boshart Davis, and members of the Committee,

My name is Liz Marquez Gutierrez, I am the policy associate at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and Latinx working families to improve their working conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy. I am writing to express our support for HB 2951-1 which would create a Spanish driver's education pilot program in Washington County.

The ability to drive legally continues to be a core everyday need for many of our farmworker families, especially in rural, agricultural communities. Farmworkers and low-wage Latinx workers take their kids to school, drive to work and take care of family and neighbors in need. However, we often hear from our Spanish-speaking community the challenges they face to obtain a driver license where they cannot pass the test due to poorly translated driving test questions. Data from the Oregon Department of Transportation shows that in 2021, the test failure rate for Spanish test takers was 37% which is 22% higher than the test failure rate for English test takers.

HB 2951-1 aims to address this issue by directing the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to allocate funding for a pilot grant program to Centro Cultural to offer Spanish traffic safety education courses in Spanish in Washington County. HB 2951-1 would also require Centro Cultural to work with DAS to report how many people participated in the program and successfully completed the course, challenges or recommendations to expand Spanish driver education across our state.

We believe this grant program will serve as a model for other communities to increase their number of licensed Spanish-speaking Oregonians and other communities that speak different languages. By investing in equitable access to driver education courses, Oregon will improve safety on our roads and address barriers that lead to disproportionate levels of citations, arrests and/or searches of Latinx drivers.

We urge your support on HB 2951-1. Thank you for your consideration.

Liz Marquez Gutierrez
Policy Associate
PCUN