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LatinoNetwork

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To: Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf and all the member of the committee
Re: Support HB 4159
Date:2/5/2024

Latino Network was founded in 1996 by advocates for the needs of the growing Latinx community in Multnomah County. Since then, these grassroots beginnings have evolved into a continuum of services that support Latinx individuals, families, and communities. Our programs currently focus on education, advocacy & leadership, health & wellness, economic justice, youth empowerment & violence prevention, and arts & culture, engaging nearly 11,000 community members throughout Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties in the last year. We are the leading culturally-specific provider for Latinx youth, parent, and family services in the Portland area with the goal of serving the nearly 19% of Oregon's population who identify as Latinx or Hispanic.

Latino Network currently provides direct services to youth and families in Senate Districts 13-15 and 19-25 and House Districts 25, 26, 28, 29, 37, 40 and 42-50.

We support HB 4159 because we know that a strong start makes for strong communities. We seek a future where all families and individuals are able to thrive and reach their full potential, we know this is only ever possible with love, support and the right resources available at the right time. This bill will help us create a better floor of support that ensures Oregonians are getting the most out of existing systems of support and investment and collaborating across organizations to keep families safely housed, fed and on the path to stability.

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement with the support of and in consultation with Oregon Department of Human Services shall coordinate with community-based organizations and award contracts to equitably provide eligible newcomers culturally and linguistically appropriate support services.

Individuals and families who are in the process of seeking asylum often do not qualify for federal benefits until they are granted asylum. While their asylum application is pending, they may be eligible to apply for an employment authorization document, 180 days after the asylum application has been submitted. As a result, they are not eligible to work, which intentionally prevents them from getting their most basic needs met. Without access to basic resources, this community will continue to experience houselessness, food insecurity and other forms of material hardship, contributing to negative well-being outcomes and lasting disparities in Oregon.

Please vote YES on HB 4159

For questions: Mercedes Elizalde | Director of Advocacy | mercedes@latnet.org