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February 13, 2024

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the Senate Committee on Rules:

My name is Kathy Wai, and I'm the Legislative Director to Secretary Lavonne Griffin-Valade, Oregon's 29th Secretary of State. The Secretary urges your support of SB 1533, which expands translated materials in our voter pamphlets to additional languages spoken by Oregonians. The mission of the Secretary of State's Office is to build trust between the people of Oregon and their state government so that public services can make a positive difference in people's everyday lives. As Oregon's chief elections officer, one of the ways we build trust in elections is providing equitable access to our democracy.

In recent years, Oregon has made great strides to become an inclusive state where people of all cultures can fully participate in civic life. We ask you to continue that work by increasing the number of languages in which we provide in the Oregon Voters Pamphlet. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 3021, directing the Secretary of State to provide translated state and county voter pamphlets using the five most common languages in the state: Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian and Korean.

The bill also created a formula to determine the languages of translation for each counties' primary, general, and special elections. Translated pamphlets can be found on our [webpage](#). To guide the implementation of HB 3021, the bill created the Translation Advisory Council (TAC), which has provided culturally specific advice on the translations process as well as leadership on community engagement. The Council currently consists of 25 Oregonians volunteering their time to do this work. Since 2022, the Council reviewed hundreds of translated pamphlets on web pages in thirteen languages for thirteen counties.'

The Council is currently preparing to review translations of the May 2024 Primary election voters' pamphlets and recently developed a 500+-word elections terminology glossary in thirteen languages.

We have learned a lot since HB 3021 became law and listened to additional communities about language access. We heard from advocates of non-included languages, including the Somali American Council of Oregon, the African Coalition, the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Oregon Department of Human Services Slavic Employee Resource Group, the Portland Chinese Times, and Council members.

Senate Bill 1533 is a product of their engagement, and an expansion of additional languages using census data to inform which languages are included. Based on current census data, it would have the result of

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adding Traditional Chinese (written Chinese character), Farsi, Romanian and Somali to the language lists, ensuring that the communities who speak those languages can fully participate in our democracy.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 1533. I urge your support.

Thank you,
Kathy Wai

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