



February 18, 2025

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle Glass and I submit this testimony on behalf of SO Health-E, a health equity coalition advancing the well-being of families across Southern Oregon. **We strongly support House Bill 2958 to renew and strengthen Oregon's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).**

Economic stability is a key driver of health. The EITC helps low-wage workers afford food, housing, and healthcare, reducing disparities statewide. Without legislative action, Oregon's EITC will expire. HB 2958 not only renews it but strengthens it to better support working families, especially in rural communities where access to healthcare and essential services is limited. **Rural families are more likely to qualify for the EITC, making its expansion critical for reducing geographic health disparities and boosting economic stability.**

Additionally, the EITC plays a crucial role in addressing racial and gender health disparities. Women—especially women of color—are overrepresented in low-wage jobs and experience greater economic insecurity. Strengthening the EITC will help bridge these inequities, improve health outcomes, and provide much-needed financial relief to historically underserved communities.

Beyond immediate relief, a stronger EITC yields long-term cost savings for Oregon. Research shows that financial stability improves health outcomes, reduces emergency healthcare dependence, and lowers chronic illness rates, all of which decrease public healthcare and social service expenditures. This makes the EITC a fiscally responsible investment in Oregon's future.

Strengthening the EITC will create a ripple effect—improving economic conditions, reducing poverty, and advancing health equity for thousands of Oregon families. We urge the committee to support HB 2958 and take this vital step toward a healthier, more equitable Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Glass
Policy and Advocacy Coordinator,
SO Health-E, the Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition