

JoAnn R. Miller 2925 Westpark CT. SE., Albany, OR 97322
Joannrmiller@comcast.net

RE: Senate Bill 528

Attention: Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for **SB 528**. My name is JoAnn Miller, and I am the board president and original member of the Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance. I am also the current president of the Oregon Public Health Association, president of the Willamette Vocational Resource Community, Treasurer of the African American Youth Leadership Coalition, Treasurer of the KinCultivate Inc. and member of the Oregon Health Authority Developing Equity Leaders Through Advocacy (DELTA) advisory board, however, today I am speaking as an Albany community member. I agree that SB 528 is vital in providing crucial resources to Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHECs) to continue their critical work in addressing health inequities in rural and underserved communities across Oregon. By utilizing grassroots community engagement, RHECs can identify the most pressing issues and advocate for meaningful change in policies and systems.

The expansion of three additional RHECs, as proposed by this bill, will ensure that communities across the state, especially those in rural areas, have access to the support and resources they need to thrive. This is also included in Governor's Kotek recommended budget.

I support this bill because I believe community coalitions are the best venue to bring together individuals, agencies, schools and elected officials to truly address the needs of the most vulnerable populations in a community. I also believe community coalitions such as the RHECs can reach out to underserved and marginalized populations to provide input to the policies and systems that are designed to support them. Finally, I have been doing coalition work for over thirty years in Oregon and have seen the impact and changes that result in these local efforts.

This bill will significantly increase the capacity of RHECs to support our communities by adding three new coalitions across Oregon. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of **SB 528**.

Thank you,

JoAnn R. Miller