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On Behalf Of: V Walters
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB569

I believe that this bill creates an unfair playing field for many hardworking business owners who do not qualify under its specific criteria. Rather than fostering an environment of equal opportunity, SB 569 effectively establishes government-sponsored favoritism, which disadvantages small businesses solely based on ownership demographics.

One of the fundamental principles of business success is competition based on merit, quality, and service—not race, ethnicity, or background. By allocating taxpayer-funded resources to certain businesses over others, the state is undermining the principle of free enterprise and creating an artificial barrier for companies that do not meet the bill's criteria. Many non-minority business owners have faced challenges in establishing and growing our businesses without preferential treatment, and should not be placed at a competitive disadvantage by our own state government. Furthermore, SB 569 may inadvertently lead to inefficiencies in public contracting. The primary focus in awarding contracts should be on the ability of a business to deliver the best service at the best price, rather than fulfilling a quota or preference system. Oregon's procurement policies should ensure that public funds are spent wisely, not allocated based on an entity's ownership demographics.

A fair and effective alternative to this bill would be to create a grant program that assists all small businesses in navigating the certification process, regardless of the background of their owners. If the intent of SB 569 is truly to foster economic opportunity, then we should focus on supporting all entrepreneurs rather than selecting specific groups for preferential treatment. I urge this committee to reject SB 569 in its current form and consider policies that promote true equality in business opportunities. Government programs should support all Oregon businesses, ensuring that every entrepreneur has the same access to success through their hard work and capabilities rather than their personal sexual preference