

March 23, 2025

The Honorable Representative Thuy Tran and Committee members

Re: Letter of Support for HB3595 Lunar New Year State Holiday

Dear Representative Tran and Committee Members:

I am a retired educator in the Oregon University System and one of the founding members of Salem Chinese Evangelical Church in Salem, Oregon. I am honored to be able to provide support for HB3595. In fact, I am thrilled that you have brought this bill forward.

Salem Chinese Evangelical Church is the only Chinese church in Salem, serving Asian community for more than 40 years. Our congregation consists of Asian Americans from Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Vietnam, Singapore and Cambodia. One of the common threads for our families is the celebration of Lunar New Year each year. We have collaborated with Chinese School in the past and hosted many Lunar New Year celebrations at the church. We have had as many as 200 attendees at past celebrations.

Culturally, Lunar New Year is the most important celebration for our families. It's a time for families to gather and pay respect to our elders. While individual traditions may differ, the importance of ringing in the New Year together as a family is essential. Lunar New Year is also a time to gather with friends. From my own experience, we loved special meals with a large group of family and friends. No feast is complete without Oregon's fresh delicious seafood of course.

Having taught at Oregon Institute of Technology for 26 years, I never had Lunar New Year off unless it fell on weekends. My family could never plan a gathering with friends because of my work schedule. Many of my Asian students sometimes would just skip class on that day in order to spend it with their families.

The legal recognition of Lunar New Year as a State Holiday would be much appreciated by Oregon's public employees and students. It affects not only over 130,000 to 180,000 Asian Oregonians but many more non-Asian Oregonians who know about Lunar New Year traditions. It is already a State Holiday in California, Colorado, New York, New Jersey and Washington.

Your consideration of this bill is much appreciated.

Sincerely,



Sherry Yang, Ph.D.

Pastoral Assistant, Salem Chinese Evangelical Church

Professor Emerita, Oregon Institute of Technology

csetyang@gmail.com