

Senator Health Care Committee
900 Court St. NE, S 411
Salem. Oregon, 97301

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden and Senate Health Care Committee members,

Let me introduce myself. My name is Hanil Alik. I am serving as the Chairman of the Board for the Oregon Marshallese Community Association (OMCA), a non-profit 501(c)3 that represents some 3 to 4 thousand Marshallese in the state of Oregon. I also serve as a pastor of Kings Chapel, a prominent Marshallese Protestant church in Salem.

I am writing to let you know that OMCA fully supports SB 442 and sees its passage as essential for the Marshallese and other COFA communities to be able to receive the safety net benefits they are now entitled to under the Compact 3 treaty of 2024. I say this with great conviction as, through my pastor's eyes, the confusion and extreme difficulty my people are having understanding what they are eligible for and how to apply for benefits they badly need. OMCA, and the other COFA non-profits that have received grants for delivering specific benefits are limited in their ability to reach everyone. It's like each non-profit has a niche role that leaves out what is essential: a central point of access to information and assistance in the native languages of COFA citizens that would be known to all and accessible through multiple modes of communication. A service that is available to assist any COFA person understand what they are eligible for and help them through the application process. Toward this end, the office recommended in SB 442, would have more stable funding and personnel than any non-profit in Oregon could provide.

I am pleased to add my voice to the importance of SB 442 to my community. I also have been hearing that some non-profits have concerns. They should not be worried as they will still be needed, and with passage of SB 442 they will have a state office to help guide and direct them so they can be more effective.

Again, thank you Committee members for giving me the opportunity to tell you why our community really needs this bill.

Respectfully,

Hanil Alik
halik@oregonmarshallese.org ; yokwecare@live.com
503-385-6468
OMCA Chairman of the Board
Pastor, Kings Chapel Church

