

March 25, 2025

To Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonha, and Members

**SB 790**

Request: Renames the position of **Administrator** of the Oregon Advocacy Commission Office to **Executive Director** of the Oregon Advocacy Commission Office

My name is Liz Fouter-Branch, and I serve as a Commissioner on the Oregon Commission for Black Affairs. Today, however, I am writing as a constituent and community advocate from Multnomah County. I fully support renaming the position of the Oregon Advocacy Commission Office (OACO) administrator to the Executive Director of the OACO. The OACO was created by statute in 2005 when the state reduced office staffing from four administrators (one for each commission) to one due to budget constraints.

In 2025, the Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Women's Commissions expanded their outreach under the guidance of our current OACO Director and staff, while still being significantly understaffed and poorly resourced. The populations they serve have at least doubled in twenty years. However, OACO remains underfunded and lacks adequate resources. This situation also dampens community trust and engagement.

This is a challenging task for any executive leader and their staff, as they continue to depend solely on community sponsorship and outreach from commissioners. A well-resourced advocacy office would help generate community interest, buy-in, and confidence in the office by being visible and conducting town halls or listening sessions. Therefore, this straightforward internal acknowledgment, along with a serious examination of how to better fund the office, would greatly enhance contributions to community input, volunteerism, and participation. Again, I fully support renaming OACO's Administrator to Executive Director.

Liz Fouter-Branch  
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