

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice Co-Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, and members of the committee:

My name is Rita Aguilar, and I am a community member and leader, representing Mid-Columbia Health Equity Advocates (MCHEA) Abogados de la Comunidad in The Dalles, Oregon. I'm writing to respectfully request your support for HB 2990, which intends to improve language access for Oregon's driver's license written tests.

This bill directs the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to revise the written test for Class C driver license applicants to make it more accessible and easier to understand—particularly for individuals who do not speak English as their primary language. Under this legislation, ODOT must submit a progress report to the Joint Committee on Transportation by September 15, 2026. The report will outline efforts to translate the test into multiple languages, improve readability, establish a timeline for the release of the revised test, and detail the translation process, including attention to dialects and the qualifications of translators involved.

A driver's license is more than just a piece of identification—it's a key to opportunity. It provides access to jobs, health care, education, and other essential services, especially in rural and underserved areas where public transportation may be limited or unavailable. It also plays a critical role in supporting local economies by enabling individuals to participate in the workforce and engage in their communities.

I support this bill because it is essential to have a driver's license. There were times I felt powerless. Without a driver's license, I would not have been able to get affordable vehicle insurance, go to my medical appointments, and drive to work. I have friends who have experienced a lot of difficulty passing the knowledge exam because they don't know how to navigate and use a computer or screen. They also don't understand or comprehend the Driver's Manual well. It is not worded correctly. This is very important to have in our daily lives regardless of everyone's language.

Ensuring that all people in Oregon have a fair opportunity to obtain a driver's license, regardless of the language they speak, is vital to building strong, thriving communities. When people can access the licensing process, they're better equipped to pursue opportunities that support their health, well-being, and long-term success—and they are also better able to contribute to the economic and social vitality of their communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony, and for your consideration of HB 2990.

Rita Aguilar

MCHEA Abogados de la Comunidad member