

Submitter: Salvador Pantoja
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2990
Testimony in Support of HB 2990
Salvador Pantoja
Executive Director, Health Equity Coalition of Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Salvador Pantoja, and I am the Executive Director of the Health Equity Coalition of Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties. I am also a native Spanish speaker and a bilingual individual fluent in English. I'm writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2990, because I've personally experienced—and witnessed—the barriers this bill aims to address.

When I took my driver's license knowledge test, I quickly realized that the Spanish-language materials were confusing, inconsistent, and poorly translated. If I hadn't been fluent in English, I would not have passed the test. That reality speaks volumes.

Many members of our community—especially immigrants and Spanish speakers—face these same challenges every day. They study the manual, take classes, and prepare, but still fail the test. Not because they don't understand the rules of the road, but because the language is unclear or doesn't match what they studied. The translation issues and lack of support make the process unfair and deeply discouraging.

We must remember: a driver's license is more than permission to drive. It is a basic form of identification, essential for accessing health care, filling prescriptions, securing employment, buying insurance, and simply moving through daily life. When language becomes a barrier to obtaining a license, it creates a ripple effect that impacts entire families and communities.

This is not just a transportation issue. It's a health equity issue. It's an access issue. It's an issue of fairness and dignity.

HB 2990 responds to a real need in our communities. It's a step toward leveling the playing field, ensuring that everyone—regardless of the language they speak—has a fair chance to succeed and contribute.

Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to equity and inclusion in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Salvador Pantoja
Executive Director
Health Equity Coalition of Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties