

For Legislative Record, I am Jaymes Winters, CEO of Blue Leopard Capital. Good morning Chairperson Burdick, and members of the committee. Having previously testified in favor of the House version of this same measure, I am here before all of you as well to express my support for Senate Bill 1586, otherwise known as the Investment Act of Oregon. As someone who was born, raised and educated both secondarily and collegiately here in this great State, I have seen first hand the effects that a lack of minority entrepreneurship has in our communities. This measure represents a much more effective approach to deal with the unspeakable level of poverty, crime and unemployment faced by our communities.

As we sit here today, 98% of all businesses owned by minority entrepreneurs have two or less employees. There are no funding mechanisms for boutique, minority owned private equity operations such as ours who specialize in supporting minority entrepreneurs who wish to acquire larger enterprises located out of state and relocate them here in Oregon. For whatever reason, traditional sources of capital for our partnership has been non-existent.

To the extent that this legislation comes face to face with this dilemma, it should be strongly endorsed by all those concerned because what Oregon needs sooner, rather than later, is a flexible capital vehicle that takes into account all of the state sponsored enterprise incentives and in doing so, insures that these resources are available to ALL of Oregon's businesses.

I again wish to thank all members of the committee for the opportunity to be heard here today.