



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs

"Advocating Equality and Diversity"

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April 11, 2013

Sen. Lee Beyer, Chair, Sen. Bruce Starr, Vice Chair
Sen. Chris Edwards, Sen. Fred Girod, Sen. Rod Monroe, Sen. Chuck
Thomsen of the Senate Business & Transportation Committee

Honorable Sirs,

This Commission is authorized by Oregon Revised Statute 185.310 - 185.330 to: 1) Monitor existing programs and legislation designed to meet the needs of Oregon's Hispanic population. 2) Identify and research problem areas and issues affecting the Hispanic community and recommend actions to the Governor and the Legislative Assembly, including recommendations on legislative programs. 3) Maintain a liaison between the Hispanic community and government entities. 4) Encourage Hispanic representation on state boards and commissions. 5) Hold meetings to conduct its business.

As the official voice of 456,000 Hispanic, Latino, and Indígena (Indigenous persons from Mexico, Central and Latin America) people in the State of Oregon before the Oregon Legislature, we recommend support for Senate Bill 833 that provides short term driver licenses to applicants who do not provide proof of legal presence in this country but otherwise have complied with all requirements for license or permit and has resided in Oregon for more than one year. Public safety mandates passage of this bill. SB 833 optimizes safety and competency. Drivers should be licensed and insured. This bill fulfills multiple aims of ensuring drivers are competent and fully licensed.

Senate Bill 833 is in response to a convergence of growing concerns from our Latino community and stakeholders throughout the state since 2008, especially as thousands of long-held driver licenses were expiring with no chance of renewal. With the availability of short-term driver licenses and permits joining the list of DMV regulated licenses, all people in this state can feel safer and secure on Oregon's streets and highways.

This impetus for this bill emerged from a thoughtful and thorough consultative two year process by a working group of key organizations convened by Governor Kitzhaber to study the impact of limiting driver licenses to certain communities. Invited to be part of this unprecedented gathering of varying social and political perspectives and priorities, the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs was represented on this working group by Gilbert P. Carrasco, OCHA Vice Chair, and I. Commissioner Carrasco is also faculty of the College of Law at Willamette University and an expert in civil, immigration, and constitutional law. He also worked for the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington D.C.

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Essentially, we brought to the table the comments and concerns from our communities and their experiences of driver license restrictions. We also gave due diligence on the issues of equal protection under the law, issues of constitutionality, in the light of the myriad life and work situations of our families throughout the state in the absence of clear federal policies on immigration.

The economy is another priority for our community. Having individuals able to drive to and from their jobs is crucial in rebuilding our economy. We heard stories from individuals throughout the state who were unable to drive to work and had to take lower-paying jobs closer to home in order to continue to work. They were also challenged by living in areas where public transportation is not readily available. Senate Bill 833 will assure the safe mobility of our families and our work force with licensed and insured drivers.

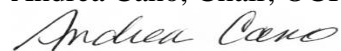
We are pleased to see bi-partisan support for Senate Bill 833 because all legislative representatives have significant Latino population in each of their districts. The Latino population demographics based on the 2010 U.S. census, and density by county maps attached to this letter and other demographic studies available through Portland State University and Oregon State University illustrate that our community has been present and integrated in cities and towns in the urban, rural, suburban, and coastal regions for decades and in some areas since the turn of the century – with a majority of us citizens, legal residents, and voters.

Finally, we wish to stress that this bill is not about immigration or whether the undocumented are getting "special" benefits. Instead, this bill is a common sense approach to solve an immediate problem of thousands of Oregonians who are affected by expired licenses since 2008.

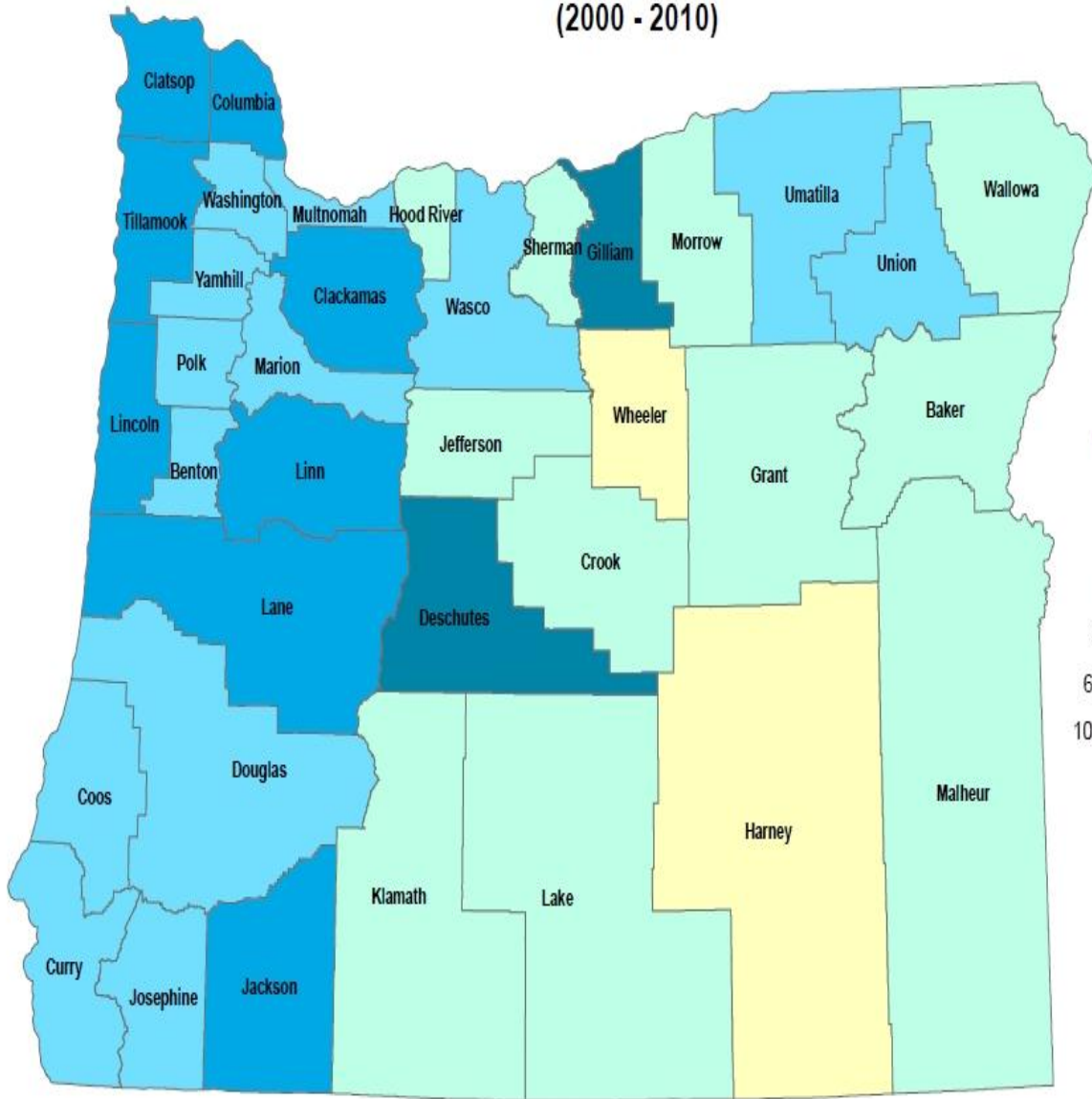
In hopes that this bill will be enacted, know that the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs will be consulting with Oregon's Department of Motor Vehicles, to engage local, regional and statewide partners, stakeholders, and community organizations to inform and instruct about the application procedures for this new license.

Sincerely,

Andrea Cano, Chair, OCHA



Percent Latino Population Change (2000 - 2010)



0 50 100 200
Miles



Sources:
Census 2000 SF1
Census 2010 GCT-PL1

Kevin Ranick
Population Research Center
 Portland State
UNIVERSITY

