

OREGON LAW CENTER

921 SW Washington Street, Suite 516, Portland Oregon 97205

Letter of support for HB 2134 and HB 2611

John Mullin, Legislative Advocate (503)-867-6236

Senate Health Care and Human Services Committee

May 7, 2013

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express support for HB 2134 and HB 2611.

The Oregon Law Center's mission is "to achieve justice for the low income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services." These bills are very important to the populations we serve.

With regard to HB 2134, we believe better and more precise data collection will give us all additional tools in the critical work to eliminate health disparities. We are particularly interested in language issues, as many of our clients need the proper assistance with translation when applying for services or in grievance and appeal processes. It should be noted that data about language preference should be collected for all members of the household.

HB 2611, the cultural competency bill is also important to us. We advocated for the passage of SB 97, a similar bill in the 2011 session, which, unfortunately, did not become law. I am hopeful that the path is now clear to take this important step.

These two bills are related in the sense that we need proper data and that we must improve the sensitivity and dignity of a "person centered" approach to health by ensuring greater cultural competence through targeted training.

Finally, I would just add that I serve on the Health Equity Policy Committee sponsored by the Office of Equity and Inclusion. I have learned a great deal through this involvement, and I have been very impressed by those advocates who have taken the lead in moving these issues from analysis and discussion to action. It is now up to you to take up the charge and act on these bills. I urge your positive action on these two bills.

Thank you for your consideration.