

Thank you Chairman Greenlick, members of the committee:

My name is Nancy Nickel, 1532 NE 21<sup>st</sup> Ave# 504 Portland, Or  
I represent Portland Jobs with Justice. Our organization supports HB 2611.

JWJ is a coalition of 90 labor, community and faith groups. We support this Bill because low-wage workers will benefit from cultural competency training of healthcare workers. We know that a worker who is not well, cannot work, or, they will try to work because they cannot afford to miss a single day, but they won't be able to work very well. I am not going to talk about whether or not a worker can even afford medical attention, that is another, very important issue to be addressed at another time.

Oregon's population is becoming more and more diverse and that diversity is perhaps greatest among low-wage workers. Healthcare providers need to be equipped to serve the new cultures ~~and languages~~ of this growing population. We at JWJ believe that everyone has a right to get appropriate medical attention when they need it, and in the case of a worker, access to medical care is really critical. They have to be well so they will be able to work so that they can provide economic security for themselves and their families.

If a healthcare provider cannot basically understand the ~~language or~~ the culture of that worker, there is obviously going to be a real barrier between that person and their provider, and the treatment outcomes are not going to be as good as they might be.

If there is not communication between that ill or hurt worker and their provider and the worker doesn't get the care he or she needs, it could mean them losing a job because of a health problem that might have been taken care of if there was communication. This hurts the worker, their family, and the State. But healthcare workers are pretty much expected to figure out on their own how to communicate with the ever-growing diversity of Oregon's population. It has to be frustrating for them to not be able to meet the needs of their patients. Others here have provided or will be providing, information about the additional costs that inappropriate care adds to the system.

JWJ believes that the State of Oregon has a responsibility to set clear standards for Culturally Competent healthcare and an additional responsibility to provide healthcare workers with the support they need to meet those standards, through training. Having a healthy workforce is vital to the State. We believe that HB2611 should be enacted.