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Governor



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Testimony in Support of HB 5001
Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 1 pm, H-170
Joint Ways and Means General Government Committee

Co-Chairs Sen. Steiner Hayward and Rep. Greg Smith and members Sen. Johnson, Sen. Whitsett, Rep. Heard, Rep. Komp, and Rep Taylor:

Thank you for hearing our presentations today as we present the work of the four Oregon Advocacy Commissions over the current biennium, and respond to the question you asked us when we appeared before your committee in 2013: what further resources would the OAC's need to more fully achieve their statutory missions? We promised then to provide a thoughtful answer to you and include it for your consideration in our next budget presentation.

Over the past biennium, both jointly and in our separate Advocacy Commissions, we have reviewed our missions, reviewed the work and outcomes of the OAC's, as well as areas where staffing bandwidth has slowed us from achieving our goals. We then worked together with DAS HR and the Governor's Office to create a staffing plan that will better allow us to achieve the OAC's equity-focused statutory missions in 3 key areas: advocacy, research, and community engagement. We are excited to present this to you today, answer questions about it and ask your help with investment in 3 essential staff positions and a reclassification of the existing Executive Support Specialist 1 to level 2.

These additional positions would:

- Increase the number and scope of legislative proposals the Commissions champion with testimony each biennium from 30 to 40+,
- Double the number of public policy research projects the Commissions sponsor with key state partners and address the backlog of research topics the OAC's currently have,
- Allow the Commissions to connect with their constituent communities statewide and engage them in policy considerations to improve longstanding disparities in our communities and become partners with Regional Hubs in education, health and jobs/economy.
- Provide staff support for the OAC's emerging committee structure, which adds 100 additional meetings per biennium to the 70+ Commission meetings the staff must currently support. It is in their committees that the OAC's discuss and forward their statutory work.

As part of our testimony we have attached 1-page overviews of the OAC's Advocacy and Public Policy Research in the current biennium, and 2 examples of our research that are now guiding essential policy discussions and development. These include Issue Briefs on Disproportionate Disc, ELL, and Chronic Absenteeism with OEIB/OCHA/OCAPIA and Disparities in Graduation for tradespeople of color from Apprentice to Journeyman status with BOLI/OCBA.

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The Oregon Advocacy Commissions have emerged as valued partners for community groups, the Governor's Office, ODE, OEIB, DOJ, BOLI, OHA, the State Library Reference Division, and others on equity related research and policy development. Those partnerships have come far over the past two biennia with OACO's current two staff members. A further investment in OACO for the 2015-17 biennium is well timed for the Advocacy Commissions to ramp up their support of Oregon's equity agenda in a significant, measurable way.

Thank you for considering the Advocacy Commissions' statutory work as you weigh the equity-related investments you will build into the Joint Chairs' Budget. We appreciate the care and attention with which you invest in Oregon's support of success for communities of color and women in education, health care access, economy and jobs, safety and policing, and other key areas where the Advocacy Commissions are committed to advancing equity. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with the Legislature and the Governor.

Sincerely,



Stephen Ying, Chair, OCAPIA



Alberto Moreno, Chair, OCHA



James I. Manning, Jr., Chair, OCBA



Stephanie Vardavas, Chair, OCFW