



Joint Ways and Means, General Government Committee  
March 25, 2015

RE: Testimony on Funding for the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office

Co -Chairs Sen. Steiner Hayward and Rep. Greg Smith and Members of the Committee  
On behalf of our community based organizations, we urge your continued support for Oregon Advocacy Commissions. Each commission provides a critical governmental service in linking communities of color and women to the Executive and Legislative branches of the State of Oregon.

Oregon has one of the fastest growing communities of color in the US, where 1 in 5 today are persons of color. Our community is increasingly diverse, representing a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Despite contributions that go back to before Oregon became a state, we face persistent challenges and disparities particularly in the areas of education, health and economic opportunity. The commissions are a key component of our state government that provides a place to study, analyze and facilitate decision-making that seeks to advance equity and inclusion for all Oregonians.

Our organizations have worked more closely with the Oregon Advocacy Commissions. We have engaged as community partners, actively participating in commission business, providing policy research, community engagement, and supporting leadership development. The commissions have been a critical ally in supporting our communities full civic engagement in state affairs, opening doors to state officials, and providing a place to work collaboratively to address historic and contemporary issues of discrimination and unequal access.

We support the Oregon Advocacy Commission's budget request that includes additional staffing to fully resource their mission. This includes:

The Policy Analyst position would double the number of research projects we take on per biennium on the causes of disparity, analyze policy, craft policy remedies with partners, grow the number of key state partners working on equity issues, and improve legislative support to the OAC's and their partners: crafting LC's, tracking key legislation, and supporting the Commissions as they prioritize bills and testify.

The Office Assistant position would allow for staffing of the emerging committee structure and work of the OAC's on policy issues. Among the 4 Commissions, their committee structure will add 100 additional meetings per biennium that would greatly benefit from staff support.

The Community Affairs positions would allow the OAC's to engage in policy discussions with their constituent communities statewide. (This position is requested, but we it may not be funded by Joint Ways and Means this biennium)

Please support the full funding request for the Oregon Advocacy Commissions. They are a crucial link in facilitating citizen involvement in the workings of state government.

Sincerely,

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Oregon (APANO)

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