



Oregon

Bureau of Labor and Industries

Brad Avakian
Commissioner

March 25, 2015

Co-Chairs Sen. Steiner Hayward and Rep. Greg Smith and Members of the Ways and Means, General Government Committee:

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions are making a positive difference in the lives of Oregonians. They work to give underrepresented populations a voice, investing time and energy to conduct important public policy research, analysis and policy development to make our state stronger and more equitable.

The Commissions' priority focus areas are significant to Oregonians:

- Jobs and the economy
- Education
- Health care
- Justice, safety and policing
- Civic engagement
- Housing and stable families

In addition, the Advocacy Commissions work to grow the number and influence of women and people of color in all branches of state government. The Commissioners are working to create more opportunity for more Oregonians—and new pathways for Oregon's next generation of leaders.

The Advocacy Commissions are effective because they work in close partnership and collaboration with a diverse group of organizations committed to a stronger state. They've partnered with organizations such as the Urban League, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), Oregon Latino Health Coalition, League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women (AAUW), Center for Intercultural Organizing (CIO) and the Oregon Latino Agenda for Action (OLAA) to conduct business forums, legislative advocacy days and important public policy research.

The Advocacy Commissions were an important part of last legislative session's coalition to close the internship loophole – making Oregon the first state to ensure civil rights protection for unpaid interns navigating the workplace. They are a valued partner in this session's effort to strengthen Oregon's equal pay laws so that we can create a stronger economy for everyone. And they're working closely with our agency's Apprenticeship and Training Division to study and bring recommendations about how best to diversify the state's workforce.

I support the critical mission of the Advocacy Commissions and the effort to ensure that they have the resources necessary to continue their important work.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Avakian
Commissioner, Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

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