

Kate Brown
Governor



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Testimony on Funding for the
Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office: HB 5001
Wednesday, March 25, 2015
Joint Ways and Means, General Government Committee

Dear Co-Chairs Sen. Steiner Hayward and Rep. Greg Smith, and committee members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the legislative appointees serving on the Oregon Advocacy Commissions as we stand in support of the work and the associated staffing requests for the Advocacy Commissions in the 2015-17 biennium. The Administrator and Assistant who staff these four Commissions support the effective work of OAC's in improving the success of communities of color and women statewide. A few of us have been serving on the OACs since their refunding in 2005 and many of us have more than 4 years of history with them, but all of us are clear that the Advocacy Commissions now produce outcomes essential to addressing long standing barriers and the underlying causes that challenge Oregon in education, health, justice and safety, jobs and economy, stable families and community. We all volunteer our time because we know the need to strengthen communities of color and break down barriers is crucial. The OACO supports our work to craft public policy and legislation, grow leadership, and better governmental response around health, safety and education for these target communities.

The Commissions have been de-funded in the past much to the detriment of their leadership. They have now consolidated their administration under one office of 2 staff for all the commissions (OACO). They benefitted from renewed commitment from the Governor's office to assure Commissioner appointments commensurate for their statutory tasks. The Commissions have grown strong partnerships within state government and support within the communities they serve, and have leveraged their strategic focus with outreach around the state and are working collaboratively with their partners to produce research that sheds new light on long standing problems. The Commissions have been strong partners in recent tough times and this is our opportunity to provide the staffing level they need as they expand their advocacy, double their research, and engage their communities statewide.

We legislators have been part of the staff review and plan the OAC's have developed over the past 2 years spurred in part by the question Joint Ways and Means General Government committee asked the Chairs in 2013: what resources do you need to achieve your missions? As I prepared to write this letter on behalf of all of my colleague legislators, we polled each of us on our support for the OAC's and their staffing request and found it to be unanimous. We cannot expect 2 staff to

OR Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

Stephen Ying, Chair
Mari Watanabe, Vice Chair
Legislative Liaisons:
Sen. Michael Dembrow
Rep. Gene Whisnant

OR Commission on Black Affairs

James I. Manning Jr., Chair
James Morris, Vice Chair
Legislative Liaisons:
Sen. Rod Monroe
Rep. Lew Frederick

OR Commission on Hispanic Affairs

Alberto Moreno, Chair
John Haroldson, Vice Chair
Legislative Liaisons:
Sen. Chip Shields
Rep. Jessica Vega Pederson

OR Commission for Women

Stephanie Vardavas, Chair
Jeanne Burch, Vice Chair
Legislative Liaisons:
Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson
Rep. Betty Komp

Staff

Lucy Baker, Administrator
Nancy Kramer, Executive Assistant

run a state office with all of its attendant requirements and keep up with the growing, statutory work of these four Commissions.

The Chairs testimony and related materials being presented before the committee today includes overviews of the ways the OAC's have increased their outcomes including:

- 30 bills the OAC's have supported with testimony in 2013 and 14 sessions
- 4 bills the Commissions have sponsored through the OCBA and the OCFW
- 7 public policy research projects focused on long standing barriers in education, jobs, health and other areas all of which are providing essential policy information

We believe in the missions of the Advocacy Commissions and know they are making a difference in Oregon, working collaboratively between themselves, with key state partners and with their community groups. Please join us in keeping the OACO fully funded in the Oregon State Budget to grow their staffing and good work during the biennium ahead.

Sincerely,



Representative Gene Whisnant, OCAPIA
Senator Micheal Dembrow, OCAPIA

Representative Lew Frederick, OCBA
Senator Rod Monroe, OCBA

Representative Jessica Vega Pederson, OCHA
Senator Chip Shields, OCHA

Representative Betty Komp, OCFW
Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, OCFW