



To: House Rules Committee  
Date: March 16, 2017  
From: Nikki Fisher, Executive Director, The Bus Project  
RE: House Bill 2869

Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs McLane and Rayfield, members of the committee,

My name is Nikki Fisher, and I am the Executive Director of the Bus Project, a nonprofit dedicated to youth civic engagement and promoting voter access. I am here in strong support of House Bills 2869, 2871, and 2872.

Right now there is a need. The Bus Project regularly engages with voters who do not speak English or whose native language is not English. We believe voters should be able to access information about the issues that are of importance to them and to their communities in the language they are most comfortable; unfortunately, often the only information available about a candidate or measure is in English.

When we don't know the language a voter speaks before we reach them, we aren't able to effectively communicate. Knowing age, address and other information in the voter file does not do much if there is still a language barrier.

The Task Force on Minority Language Voting Materials, convened in 2013, took these unique challenges into account when it made its recommendations. The Bus Project participated in that process, and is happy to see that several recommendations made by the Task Force are being considered today.

HB 2869 would allow the SOS to take language data collected by other agencies and move it into the voter file and make sure it is available like other voter data so that civic engagement organizations like the Bus Project, as well as campaigns, can communicate with voters about important issues. HB 2872 would create a process by which voters could proactively request materials in languages other than English by updating their voter registration online or using the paper form.

We believe these two solutions, combined with HB 2871, would go a long way to making our elections more accessible to all Oregonians - regardless of the language they are most comfortable speaking. We urge your support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.