



522 SW Fifth Ave. Suite 812 Portland, OR 97204

House Business and Labor Committee

SB 398A

May 1, 2017

Testimony of John Mullin jmullin@oregonlawcenter.org 503-867-6236

Mister Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 398A, concerning an improvement to outreach methods for those eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

The mission of the Oregon Law Center (OLC) is to achieve justice for the low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. OLC has long been an advocate for the EITC. We have supported state expansion in order to provide additional resources for working families. We know that research and experience show that the EITC is an important way to “make work pay” by supporting low income families.

SB 398 is a reasonable and important bill for your consideration this session. According to a January 2017 report from the Oregon Center for Public Policy, Oregon ranks near the bottom in terms of EITC participation:

Of all working families across the country, Oregon working families are among the least likely to claim the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). About a quarter of eligible families in Oregon did not claim the credit in 2013. Underuse of EITC that year meant that working families in Oregon collectively left \$130 million on the table.

OLC and EITC allies are strongly supportive of improving outreach and participation. SB 398A offers a simple approach to make progress on that front by requiring that EITC information be included with W2 information about potential eligibility for EITC, and providing contact information so that workers can easily follow up to see if they qualify.

I encourage your support of SB 398A. Thank you for your consideration.