



Teresa Alonso Leon
State Representative

Dear Co-Chairs Roblan, Holvey and Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus,

I appreciate your prompt response to the increasing COVID-19 outbreak in Oregon by creating the Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response. In these difficult times, Oregonians of all backgrounds look to us for leadership and guidance. It's Cesar Chavez who said, *"History will judge societies and governments — and their institutions — not by how big they are or how well they serve the rich and the powerful, but by how effectively they respond to the needs of the poor and the helpless."* As COVID-19's negative impact on Oregon families and businesses continues, I respectfully request that you approach solutions through an intersectional lens and take into consideration Oregon's vulnerable communities - including our farmworkers, mixed-status families, asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants, and undocumented populations.

When acknowledging some of our most critical occupations in the midst of COVID-19 like doctors, nurses, first-responders, our grocery-store employees and our caregivers. I would also like to uplift our farmworkers and our farmers. I urge you to classify farmworkers, food processing employees and those considered day-laborers as essential personnel during the COVID-19 outbreak. This would help them make ends meet, and give them access to programs that many of our essential personnel are eligible for, such as childcare and paid sick leave. Our farmworkers are some of the most loyal, hard-working people our state can ask for because they work to ensure we have food on our tables, they wake up every day and toil in the fields to ensure that not only Oregon's economy stays strong but also to ensure our grocery stores are stocked up to help feed families here and across the nation. My office has received messages from farmworkers and mixed-status families across the state, with concerns about access to healthcare, concerns of losing wages if they can't work, not having information in multiple languages including those who don't speak Spanish rather speak indigenous languages. What happens if they can't pay the rent/utilities or if they get sick, who will care for their children?

As legislators, it is our duty to ensure all Oregon families come out of this pandemic united, and with full trust in our State's government and the actions we took in response to the needs of our most vulnerable. In my capacity and ability as a legislator, I have been working on several letter-writing campaigns where some of my colleagues have signed on to ensure we are being inclusive in our support and communication to Oregonians. Among these are letters to Governor Brown, requesting that her announcements be translated into Oregon's top 5 most spoken languages, and requesting that she does a press conference addressing the concerns of these vulnerable populations, a letter to HD-22's mayors, asking them to create a response plan to COVID-19 in Marion County specific to our

elders and people with disabilities, and a letter to our small businesses in hopes of better understanding any challenges they've experienced. Further, I held conference calls with farmworkers, farmers, state agencies and culturally specific partners who have expressed support for ensuring vulnerable populations are included. I ask that as you draft solutions for Oregon families in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, that you approach solutions through an intersectional scope that many partners and legislators including myself have taken.

I look forward to our collaborative efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 while ensuring we are caring for all Oregonians and approaching solutions with a lens that represents the diversity of Oregon.

Respectfully,



Teresa Alonso Leon
Oregon House of Representatives
House District 22



Janelle Bynum
Oregon House of Representatives
House District 51