

To: Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020  
From: Alicia Temple, Oregon Law Center  
Date: June 23, 2020  
Re: LC 45, REALD

Co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek, and members of the committee:

I am writing in support of LC 45 and REALD data collection.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. The vast majority of our clients have incomes at or below the federal poverty level, and work hard to provide basic necessities for themselves and their family. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended so many people's lives, as both an economic and a health crisis.

OLC supports LC 45 because we believe better and more precise data collection will give us all additional tools in the critical work to identify and eliminate health disparities. We are particularly interested in language issues, as many of our clients need the proper assistance with translation when applying for services or in grievance and appeal processes. This is important all the time, but the need has never been as pronounced as it is during this public health crisis. The disparities in the communities most impacted by COVID-19 are blatant and tragic. Data will not fix the problem, but it is a crucial step in addressing it.

Current statute does not mandate that healthcare practitioners gather REALD data, only that OHA come up with a system for collecting it from providers. We must change that and mandate this data collection. With improved and required data, we can take better care of all our communities. We must use accurate data to improve access to testing and medical treatment, to understand and fix disparities, and to appropriately allocate resources to make the biggest impact on people's health.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please support LC 45.