



Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on General Government
July 22, 2020 at 1pm

Re: Rebalance Plan for Agency Reductions of Admin Services for the
Advocacy Commissions of Oregon as a means of rebalancing the budget.

Co-Chairs Senate Majority Leader Wagner and Representative Marsh, Senator
Heard, Senator Monnes Anderson, Representative Gomberg, Representative
Nearman, Representative Smith and Representative Wilde:

On behalf of the Chairs of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
(OCHA), Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs
(OCAPIA), Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA), and Oregon
Commission for Women (OCFW), thank you for allowing me to testify today.
We deeply appreciate the CFO's and LFO's efforts over the years, along with
the Joint Ways and Means legislators, to keep the Oregon Advocacy
Commissions Office budget whole as a priority. We have done this together,
jointly choosing difficult budget reductions in sustainable ways for the
Commissions and the staff, and today is no different in that regard. We
consider you and we to have always been good partners in hard economic
times and hope you do the same. Looking ahead from the current budget
reductions to the upcoming budgeting for the next biennium, will require even
deeper commitments from the legislature, the Governor, and the Advocacy Commissions to keep
equity in the forefront, and keep the Advocacy Commissions whole and effective. COVID has
shown the kinds of disparities Oregonians face, with the most impacted, in every way, among the
constituencies served by the Advocacy Commissions statewide.

There is no more compelling time for equity than now. Each commissions has approximately 9
active, volunteer members who seek the statewide voices and needs of the residents of Oregon
on social, political, economic, and health issues of equity, to bring concerns and solutions to the
attention of our legislators, and other policy makers in our role as policy advisors, advocates and
conduits to the communities. We uplift issues regarding disparities and service needs which are
long due for redress and improvement. We support your work to make Oregon work and equity
to progress for our communities that face such considerable disparities and challenges. This work
is never more important than now. Again, let me say, it is never more important than now. In
furthering these efforts, the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office and Chairs work closely with
Governor Brown's leadership on Building a More Equitable Oregon initiative and have pledged
to bring enhanced community connections, equity analytics, with our state and community
partners, and our policy leadership overall.

**OR Commission on Asian and
Pacific Islander Affairs**

Hussein Al-Baiaty, Co-Chair
Mohamed Alyajouri, Co-Chair
Bennie Moses Mesubed, VC
Legislative members:
Senator Michael Dembrow
Rep. Carla Piluso

OR Commission on Black Affairs

Jamal T. Fox, Chair
Lawanda Manning, VC
Legislative member:
Rep. Akasha Lawrence Spence

OR Commission on Hispanic Affairs

Irma Linda Castillo, Chair
Dr. Daniel López-Cevallos, VC
Legislative member:
Rep. Andrea Salinas

OR Commission for Women

Kassandra Krifka, Chair
Dr. Maura Kelly, VC
Legislative members:
Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson
Rep. Sheri Schouten

Staff

Lucy Baker, Administrator
Nancy Kramer, Executive
Assistant
Dr. Connie Kim-Gervey,
Researcher/Policy Analyst

Within our modest budget and small staff, our partnerships interdepartmentally and within community and its stakeholder groups, we have several high-level projects in motion, for example, addressing mental health, education, and female incarceration disparities in our marginalized communities not only through the lens of the current economic, political and health crisis in our communities but to, also, offer community driven solutions in testimony, such as today. [See our applied policy research here](#). And over the past short and long sessions, we have identified and supported with testimony over 55 equity focused bills in our seven priority areas of Jobs/Economy, Health/MH/BH, Education, Stable Families and Housing, Environmental Justice, Justice/Safety/Policing, and Civic Engagement. [See our recommendations of support/testimony for equity focused legislation here](#). Searchable by year.

As the OACO budget stands now it is very slim to meet the growing and valuable work of the Commission, but we have staff savings and identified ways to reduce our services significantly this biennium, as good partners in tough times. But this biennium's allocation reduction will not be sustainable for us into the next. Therefore, as representatives for Commission leadership, we ask that you do all you can to protect funding for the equity work of the Commissions and assure we can continue our vital work of the Commissions and the Oregon Office of Advocacy Commissions thru this current crisis.

Thank you,



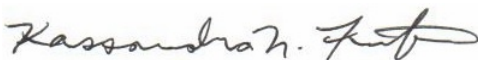
Irma Linda Castillo, OCHA Chair



Hussein Al-Baiaty and Mohamed
Alyajouri
OCAPIA Co-Chairs



Jamal Fox, OCBA Chair



Kassandra Krifka
OCFW Chair