



**To:**

House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
[hhs.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:hhs.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

**February 27, 2019**

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the House Human Services and Housing Committee:

On behalf of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), I'm writing to express our **support for HB 2139 with -1 Amendment, to renew and expand Oregon's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).**

As a statewide, grassroots organization, we work with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders across the state of Oregon to advocate for the rights, recognition, and resources of *all* families. This bill will help 900,000 families across Oregon, impacting 1 in 5 Oregonian and 4 of every 10 Oregon children.

From a 2014 Poverty Report by the Department of County Human Services Community Services Division, people of color are over-represented within Multnomah County's population in poverty. While people of color represent 28% of the overall population of Multnomah County, they represent 44% of the county's population in poverty. Although assumed that the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) community is not affected by the same disproportionality as other communities of color, our community is not monolithic and several of our members (i.e. Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders) are disproportionately affected and erased from the conversation. Furthermore, research by the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) shows that poverty rates among Asian Pacific Islander (API) families in Multnomah County are almost twice the rates for white families. CCC's research also shows that more recent API immigrants tend to experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment than the general population.<sup>1</sup>

In Washington County, Korean, Filipino, and Vietnamese (\$60,000-\$65,000) families and households earn less than the County and white family median household income (\$70,000). All three communities have family and household sizes that are larger than the average County and white households, which means two things: (1) these multigenerational households are

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<sup>1</sup> Curry-Stevens, A., Cross-Hemmer, A., & Coalition of Communities of Color (2010). Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile. Portland, OR: Portland State University.



seeking out a living in Washington County on fewer resources, and (2) they have a lower income despite potentially having multiple earners in the family.<sup>2</sup>

HB 2139 with -1 Amendment would help Asian and Pacific Islander families in poverty by raising the credit to 20% of the Federal Credit return. This provides Oregon families with wider tax breaks and tax returns that can be vital for a family's survival, such as paying for living expenses (i.e. food), housing (i.e. rent, utilities, and down payment), credit card repayment, and general debt reduction.

This bill also ensure that immigrants are not left out of this tax benefit. HB 2139 with -1 Amendment expand the eligibility for Individual Tax Identification Number users, or those who don't have Social Security Numbers, ensuring that DACA recipients, undocumented folks, those with uncertain citizenship status, and mixed-status households are eligible to receive the EITC benefit.

Supporting the renewable and expansion of EITC is about supporting Oregon families. We believe that the EITC is one of Oregon's best anti-poverty tools and a means to address economic inequities faced by communities of color and immigrants. We thank you for your time and consideration, and urge the House Human Services and Housing Committee to vote in support of this bill.

Sincerely,  
Ivy Major-McDowall  
Legislative Coordinator  
APANO

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<sup>2</sup> Coalition of Communities of Color (2018). Leading with Race: Research Justice in Washington County. Portland, Oregon: Coalition of Communities of Color.