

## Testimony to the Oregon House Committee on Education for HB 2440

Chair Doherty and members of the committee:

My name is Roberto Franco. I am the Director of the Latino Partnership Program at Oregon Community Foundation. I am here to express our support for House Bill 2440, the Latino Student Success Plan.

House Bill 2440 is about ensuring that Latino students have the tools and the support necessary to succeed from early childhood to post-secondary education and to help narrow the educational achievement gap.

A persistent achievement gap when combined with other life circumstances at home and in the community, it only means that Latino students will have more challenges to overcome to have an equal chance at life's opportunities.

There are education improvements but are not happening fast enough. Educators and schools throughout the state are aware of the statistics and are doing what they can; some more successful than others.

Latino families and Latino community organizations are also doing what they can – parents making sure their children attend school and graduate, community organizations are tutoring, mentoring and supporting students. Donors and philanthropy like Oregon Community Foundation are also doing their part. But it seems we are all doing it from various blue prints.

House Bill 2440 gives us all one blue print to work from, much like HB 2016 the Oregon legislature passed is for African American and Black students. There are Latino-led, culturally-specific and linguistically successful models that need to be added to this blue print.

In this road map that HB2440 lays out, each of us, students, parents, community organizations, policy makers and agencies have a role to play because,

- To make sure all and Latino students, the largest population of children in our schools succeed and,
- To close the achievement gap for better education outcomes

it is everybody's business.

- when less than 1/3 of Latino children read at grade level in third grade it impacts theirs and our future
- when still only 77% of Latino students graduate from high school, or
- when only 12% of Latino adults have four-year degrees

Something needs to change, and House Bill 2440 gives us that opportunity.

It gives us all a chance to be part of the solution. It cannot be just the schools, it cannot be just the department of education, or Latino parents or Latino organizations. HB 2016 the African American/Black Student Success Plan is a proven approach.

We urge you to pass House Bill 2440 and we look forward to working with the State for its implementation.

Thank you.

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