



Oregon Secretary of State's Office Testimony on HB 2998

The Secretary of State's Corporations Division focuses on building Oregon's economy by making it easier to start and do business in Oregon, removing barriers, providing small business assistance, and creating an environment where new businesses can grow, prosper, and create family-wage jobs. The Secretary of State's office thanks Representative Alonso Leon for seeking our feedback on this bill and needed amendments.

Empowering entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds to start small businesses benefits Oregon's economy. The Secretary of State's Office supports increasing accessibility and equity throughout government. In 2018, for example, Secretary Richardson hired four new Spanish-speaking bilingual staff to help businesses and expanded [online voter registration](#) to include five new languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, and Somali. This year, we made instructions for business registry forms available on our website in over one hundred languages through Google Translate. Many browsers also now facilitate built-in translation of web pages.

HB 2998 amendments are expected to require new bilingual business forms in five additional languages and hiring new bilingual staff at a cost preliminarily estimated to exceed \$1,377,917.

New Bilingual Forms

The amended bill is expected to require creation of bilingual forms at an estimated cost of \$50,000 for certified translations. The forms would be available for customers at the Corporations Division's public counter, and PDF versions could be downloaded remotely from the Secretary of State website, printed, filled out, and submitted by mail. Forms would only be accepted if filled out in Latin-character alphabets.

Major IT Project to Upgrade Online Business Registry

The amended bill is expected to require a major IT project to reprogram the Secretary of State's online business registry application to display bilingual forms in five new languages but require that forms to be filled out in Latin-character alphabets. This would have a significant fiscal impact that is *very preliminarily* estimated to exceed \$670,000. We encourage legislators to weigh the benefits of this project compared to other important Corporations Division IT improvements that also need to be completed. Since IT professionals experienced in Corporations Division applications have limited time, projects must be prioritized.

New Bilingual Staff

The amended bill is expected to require the Secretary of State to hire four dedicated bilingual staff to support customers with limited English proficiency from communities that speak Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, and Korean. The fiscal impact would be \$647,917.

Current Corporations Division IT Projects

All Secretary of State IT resources are fully allocated according to the priorities set by the legislature and agency Portfolio Review Board. A change in priorities would require a change in the projects accomplished due to the finite set of resources within the agency. Adding HB 2998's project to the portfolio would necessarily replace some of the projects listed below that are currently in the portfolio. There are currently 17 corporations-focused projects in the portfolio. Only four of them are in active development, and the other 13 are waiting in line. This project would further delay those 13 waiting projects.

Corporations Division IT Project Portfolio - Project Name (current as of February 15)	Status
BERI Modernization	Active
UCC XML Upload	Active
Notary Responsive Web Design	Active
OBR Session Management	Active
OBR Existing Business Notification Opt-In	On Hold
BERI Split Merchant Fee	On Hold
Business Wizard Reinvention	On Hold
Office of Small Business Assistance Website Build	On Hold
Business Registration/License Renewal Change	On Hold
BERI Automate Back File Conversion Indexing	On Hold
Automate TRIM Processing	On Hold
OBR Reinstatements Group B. DLLP, FLLP, DPC, FPC, DBT, FBT, DDIP, DDINP	On Hold
CER Modernization	On Hold
BERI Certificates of Existence Online	Requested
Mobile BERI Web Search Responsive Web Design	Requested
Corporation Call Center Migration to AWS	Requested
OBR ABN Reactivations Online	Requested

Technical Changes Needed to HB 2998

We have discussed a number of technical changes that are needed with the sponsor, including a July 2021 operative date. We understand an amendment is in progress but have not yet had a chance to review it. Additional technical changes may be needed depending on how it is drafted.

All Cost Estimates Are Preliminary

Please note that the cost estimates referenced in this testimony are highly preliminary and will likely change based on additional research and policy refinement once an amendment is drafted.

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