

Oregon House of Representatives
House Committee on Business and Labor
Hearing on HB 2998

March 13, 2019



Honorable Chair Barker, Vice Chair Barreto, Vice Chair Bynum and Members of the House Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill. House Bill 2988 removes the English language only requirement for documents related to business organizations that are submitting for filing to the Secretary of State. This requirement has created barriers and diminished opportunities for entrepreneurs with Limited-English-Proficiency.

My name is Alexandra Perez Urbina I am a program director for the nonprofit Huerto de la Familia - The Family Garden. I teach a business class for immigrant families interested in starting small businesses. The entrepreneurs I work with learn enough English to speak to their customers, but comprehension of English documents is extremely difficult for them. I would like you to consider basic documents, like contract agreements, and consider how even we, as English speakers, need to take our time to read through said documents so we can comprehend them. Now, please imagine what it might be like to read them if you could only speak very little English. Many of the entrepreneurs I work with voice concern with important state documents not being in a language they can *comprehend*. Oregon's Latinx community is highly entrepreneurial and wants to create businesses. These translations will positively affect the vibrancy of our small business community and increase revenue for our state.

Based on estimates given to us by the Secretary of State Staff, the translation of filing forms could provide an addition of over 17,000 businesses per biennium. The Small Business Administration has found that the average minority owned business in Oregon hires seven employees. According to the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, in the state of Oregon, there are over 225,000 individuals with Limited English Proficiency. They all deserve access to entrepreneurship and financial opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alexandra Perez Urbina
Cambios Program Director