

HB 2998 Testimony

Chair Jeff Barker, Vice-Chair Greg Barreto, Vice-Chair Janelle Bynum and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Teresa Alonso Leon, and I am the Representative for House District 22, which incorporates Woodburn and the North part of Salem. I care deeply about ensuring every Oregonians has access to opportunities, and I support HB 2998.

The Secretary of State, a coalition of partners, and my office have been working hard to provide amendments to our current bill which will create accessibility for small business owners with Limited English Proficiency. This amendment will ensure the availability of Oregon's top limited English proficiency languages; which are Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Korean. The amendment also identifies a need to hire additional bilingual staff, dual language business forms, and the ability for these forms to be mobile friendly. Further, this bill also ensures collaboration between our coalition and the Secretary of State in the creation and implementation of the new system. This package is essential for our diverse community members to better understand how to navigate the secretary of state system and allow for more people to achieve their dream of owning their own business.

According to data from 2016, by the Migrant Policy Institute.org, there is currently an estimate of four hundred thousand (400,000) immigrant Oregonians who cannot accurately read the instructions or information on their business-related documents because of limited English proficiency. It costs folks money to register their business, and more money if a mistake is made because of a language barrier. For example, making mistakes in the application process can cost an additional fee that many people cannot afford.

These changes will create opportunity and revenue to the state and it will also provide jobs to people in need. Removing undue barriers on aspiring small business owners is a win for all of us.

I encourage you all to pave the way for new business owners and support HB 2998.

Thank you.