



Taking action for basic human needs.



To: Joint Transportation Committee
From: Human Services Coalition of Oregon
Date: April 15, 2019
Re: HB 2015

Co-Chairs Beyer and McKeown, and members of the committee,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Human Services Coalition of Oregon (HSCO) to express our strong support for HB 2015, the Equal Access to Roads Act.

For over three decades, HSCO has convened like-minded advocates in an effort to fight for the policy development and resources necessary to support vulnerable Oregonians. HSCO is made up of over 100 individuals and organizations that work together to develop effective tax, education, health care, housing, human services and economic development policy that together make Oregon a better place for all its citizens.

Access to transportation is a necessity in Oregon. It is how we get to work, get our kids to school, go to the doctor and the grocery store. HB 2015 expands eligibility for a non-Real ID driver's license for all Oregon residents that can pass the written and driving test, pay the fees, and provide proof of identity regardless of citizenship status.

The lack of access to transportation harms vulnerable communities. Nearly three quarters of Oregonians drive to work, and in 28 of Oregon's 34 counties, more than half of the population does not live within a quarter mile of public transit. Public transit access is worse in rural areas. More than 64% of Umatilla County residents and more than 75% of Baker City residents lack access to public transit. Limiting people's ability to get to and from their job, pursue new work opportunities or care for their family exacerbates the cycle of poverty.

In addition to being cut off from basic necessities, a lack of transportation also cuts people off from participation in their community. Kids are not able to participate in team sports if they cannot get to practice. Families cannot go to visit relatives in other cities. Cultural events and holiday celebrations are not an option if they are further than walking distance away. Missing opportunities like these takes a toll on communities and families.

HSCO urges the committee to expand eligibility to a Class C driver license so that all Oregonians have access to the services and opportunities they need.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Rigsby, Co-Chair
Leslie Sutton, Co-Chair

HSCO Co-Chairs
Leslie Sutton Leslie.Sutton@ocdd.org 503-780-7937
Jeremiah Rigsby Rigsbyj@careoregon.org 503-382-7760