



245 SW Bancroft Street, Suite E
Portland, OR 97230

April 16, 2019

Dear Co-Chair Lee Beyer, Co-Chair Caddy McKeown, and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2015: Equal Access to Roads Act. The Oregon Latino Health Coalition (OLHC) is proud to support an expansion in eligibility for a standard (Class C) driver's license to all Oregon residents regardless of citizenship status. OLHC is a statewide health advocacy organization working to eliminate health disparities in the Latino community. We envision an Oregon where all have equitable opportunities and resources, leading to optimal health. HB 2015 supports the health of our communities by providing all Oregonians an opportunity to meet their daily needs and access the basic essential resources necessary to healthy thriving lives.

Transportation is one of the economic and social factors that influence people's health and the health of a community. A driver's license provides access to jobs, food, education, and medical services which are critical social determinants of health. Access to a driver's license is a public health equity issue. Every day we hear stories from community members unable to make their medical appointments because of the fear of driving without a driver's license. Some families rely on public transportation, which does not always run on time and for families living in rural regions, public transportation is not an option. This impacts, people like Maria, an at-risk pregnant woman with a toddler who takes two buses, and spends over an hour on the road to get to her critical prenatal care visits. This has resulted in critical missed medical appointments.

Our immigrant communities are disproportionately impacted by state policies such as driver's licenses and produce inequitable conditions that result in disparate opportunities based on individual's legal status. Since 2016, deportations due to traffic violations have increased by 138%. Oregonians shouldn't live in fear of being deported or worry about their families being torn apart simply for taking their children to school, driving to a medical appointment or work. We have an opportunity to place Oregon as a national leader and protect the prosperity of all our communities.

This is why we urge you to support HB 2015. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Olivia Quiroz

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Executive Director

Oregon Latino Health Coalition

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