

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs

“Advocating Equality and Diversity”

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Testimony in support, SB 485
House Committee on Education
Monday, April 22, 2019, in HR D

Chair Doherty, Vice-Chairs Alonso León and Helt, and members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Linda Castillo and I am the chair of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA). OCHA supports SB 485.

Since 2017, OCHA has conducted four policy research studies regarding mental health and Latinos in Oregon.¹ Together, these studies have highlighted the shortage of mental health providers across Oregon, particularly in rural areas, as well as the need for trauma-informed, culturally-responsive mental health providers across the state.

Oregon, with the passing of HB 4124 in 2014, recognized the alarming trend of increasing youth suicides by mandating a five-year Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention plan, with updates every five years, as well as creating a new position for youth suicide and prevention in the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). In 2015, with the passing of SB 561, Oregon also acknowledged the risk of suicide contagion by directing OHA to develop reporting processes, as well as work with Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) to develop sharing and postvention protocols².

OCHA supports SB 485 for taking an important next step in helping prevent the risk of suicide contagion. Specifying that public schools, universities and private post-secondary institutions of education will collaborate with OHA to help prevent the risk of contagion, particularly given that the rate of suicide in Oregon for youth aged 10-24 has disproportionately increased as compared to the rest of the United States,³ will be critical in helping prevent suicide contagion. Respectfully, OCHA also suggests considering extending the breadth of SB 485 to include individuals in this same vulnerable age range who are continuing their training in institutions other than universities, that include trade schools, certification and apprentice programs, and other post-secondary pursuits. Making this addition would shift this bill to be more inclusive in its supports for this particularly vulnerable *age range*.

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¹ <https://www.oregon.gov/Hispanic/pages/index.aspx>

² Children First for Oregon (2017). 2017 County Data Book: Status of Oregon’s Children & Families [pdf]. Retrieved from: <https://www.cffo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Data-Book-2017.pdf>.

³ Oregon Health Authority (2015). Suicide in Oregon: Adolescents and Young Adults. Retrieved from: <https://www.cffo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Data-Book-2017.pdf>.

OCHA strongly supports SB 485, directing OHA to collaborate with certain schools and facilities when developing plans for communication following suspected suicide.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "L. Castillo".

Linda Castillo, Chair

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