



# CENTRO CULTURAL *of Washington County*

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April 30, 2019

Senator Kathleen Taylor, Chair  
Senate Committee on Workforce  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Please Oppose HB 2408-A**

Dear Chair Taylor and Members of the Committee:

Since 1972, Centro Cultural of Washington County has served Latino families, low-income families, and families of color. Our growing range of programs and services supports our mission, which is to serve the needs of our diverse community by promoting personal growth and empowerment.

HB 2408-A is of significant concern due to the potential impacts it poses to the partnership that sustains programs like the Prosperidad Economic Empowerment Center. Prosperidad serves Washington County and the greater Portland Metro Area with a dedicated team that connects participants with living wage opportunities. Prosperidad works with clients to remove barriers, like lack of education, certification, or experience. Prosperidad is a partnership with the City of Hillsboro. It relies on revenue from the Community Service Fee paid by businesses receiving a property tax exemption in the enterprise zone. **Since its inception in 2017, the City of Hillsboro invested \$1,798,469 and has \$337,243 allocated for FY2019-20.** The work done by Prosperidad has allowed us to double the investment into the center though additional funds from Federal government, State of Oregon, Washington county, other cities, Metro and foundations.

We are concerned that applying prevailing wage requirements to enterprise zones, as HB 2408-A does, will risk business growth and expansion and lead to a loss of local resources to support critical programs like Prosperidad.

Prosperidad has forged strong relationships with WorkSource and other human service organizations with referrals occurring in both directions. Prosperidad has established a “hub” for local agencies serving the Latino community people of color in a suite adjacent to their main office. This brings the case managers and support workers from other agencies to work jointly with Prosperidad staff and clients. Partners include Oregon Human Development Corporation, Latino Network, Lewis and Clark Law School, and others.

Prosperidad has proved successful, as evidenced in the following metrics:

Outcomes to date (July 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019)

- 830 individuals have registered (come in for a service and completed a brief registration form).
- Of these, 236 have been enrolled in job services. This means they have come in multiple times for sustained services and have been placed on the caseload.
- 230 people have used the language/computer lab services, many for multiple sessions.
- 71 have completed computer literacy training.
- 17 have completed GEDs and so far 64 have enrolled for GED preparation, many of whom are still in progress.
- 145 people have obtained employment.
- 125 people participated in the business development component, with 94 of them enrolled for 1:1 work.
- 23 business development workshops were delivered serving 61 clients.
- 46 new businesses have been created, 15 of which have been licensed in the City of Hillsboro.
- 16 businesses have obtained financing.

We firmly believe that all of our clients, and Oregonians at large, should be able to access living wage jobs. Those are precisely the types of jobs that are created through the enterprise zone program. As those jobs are created, it provides opportunities for our clients to have access to opportunity and true economic mobility. It is a symbiotic relationship that has proved successful in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2408-A. We urge your NO vote.

Sincerely,



Maria Caballero-Rubio  
Executive Director

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