

My name is Dr. Joseph Gallegos. I am a former Oregon State Representative, and a University Professor and Administrator for over 40 years. I am currently the Director of the Pacific University Graduate Social Work Program in Eugene, Oregon. Lastly, or maybe firstly, I am a Commissioner on the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs. I speak to you as a representative of the Governor's appointed Advocacy Commissions and as a life-long educator and Oregonian.

You have the OAC letter to read. You will see that the OAC is in full support of HB 2023.

I read with interest the testimony previously given to this Committee by University colleagues, one of them representing the Oregon Association of Scholars. Their extreme notion that the passage of this bill would encourage identity politics to be taught in our schools is worth a rebuttal. Political identity has been the rule of the land since our state was formed in 1859. One simply must visit exclusionary sections of the original state constitution or the lyrics of the state song written in 1920. No, this bill will not initiate political Identity in our schools. Rather, it will celebrate the variety of identities that represent the diversity of our state...identities that include political, gender, racial, and all cultural differences. Consider for example the contributions of the Basque culture in southern and Eastern Oregon, the African and Mexican Americans recruited to join the war effort and work the Portland shipyards, or the Japanese farmers and Chinese railroad workers, the displaced Italians after the WWII, or the Vietnamese refugees, the Finnish fishermen in Astoria, or the Russian Old Believers in Woodburn, and our many Native American cultures. And, of course we must include the urban and rural, conservative and liberal difference that create the whole of our state. This bill says that these differences are not to be feared but rather embraced for the richness differences provide to decision making, to positive and productive growth. It is time for our institutions to open their doors to the new world, the changing demographics, and the new attitudes of inclusion, equity, and collaborative decision making that includes all Oregonians.

Thank you,

Joseph S. Gallegos, PhD.

Western Research Associates