

## HB 2011 Testimony

Chair Salinas, Vice-Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Teresa Alonso Leon, and I am the Representative for House District 22, which incorporates Woodburn, through the North part of Salem. Our state is growing more diverse every day, and we need to do our best to make sure we are supporting this growth. HB 2011 gives us the opportunity to do so.

According to a 2018 press release by the State of Oregon Employment Department, there has been a 37% increase of people of color from 2006 to 2016.<sup>1</sup> A 2015 Limited English Proficiency Maps report 6.21% of Oregon's population is of limited English proficiency.<sup>2</sup> To bring this percentage to perspective I have summed the data compiled by the US census bureau on the total population of folks who have identified as black, Native American, Asian, Hawaiian Pacific Islander, and those who identified as some other race in Oregon.<sup>3</sup> While 6.27% of all Oregonians are LEP, 47% of all of our people of color are Limited English Proficient. Almost half of our communities of color are facing language barriers.

To break down Limited English Proficiency population further, Representative Salinas has 17,242 folks in Clackamas County, Representative Hayden has 1,120 people in Douglas County, and Representative Nosse has 64,793 in Multnomah County.<sup>2</sup> When we talk about who this will affect, I hope you consider the number of folks that have limited access to culturally specific and linguistically appropriate care.

It's concerning to know that the recent health care provider workforce survey showed there are counties across the state that do not have adequate provider representation. This is especially stark in counties where the Latinx population is overrepresented, even though there are a higher number of Latinx health professionals, there is still a lack of representation in the workforce. For example, of the 18 provider types listed in the Oregon Health Authority workforce report, only one provider group – CNAs – adequately represent the state's Latinx population.

All of our Oregon families regardless of where they're from, or what language they speak deserve access to services that understand the cultural intricacies within our communities and health disparities that create barriers to care. It's essential that we reduce instances where people of color are treated differently because of intentional or unintentional prejudice. The Commonwealth Fund synthesized and extrapolated a publication from the Institute of Medicine. This report concluded, "to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities, health care professionals must explicitly acknowledge that race and racism factor into health care."<sup>4</sup>

We must invest in every opportunity to ensure providers have every tool available to bridge experiences and support culturally and linguistically appropriate care. HB 2011 continues our pursuit of developing a workforce prepared to serve all Oregonians.

I urge your support for HB 2011

1. <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/race-and-ethnic-diversity-in-oregon-s-workforce>
2. <https://www.lep.gov/maps/lma2015/Final/>
3. <https://www.infoplease.com/us/comprehensive-census-data-state/demographic-statistics-245>
4. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/newsletter-article/2018/sep/focus-reducing-racial-disparities-health-care-confronting>