



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Sanchez
Vice-Chair Bynum
Vice-Chair Sprenger

FR: Jess Giannettino Villatoro, Political Director, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: Support for HB 4004

The Oregon AFL-CIO, representing over 300,000 working Oregonians, is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. As we consider our role as a worker advocate, we do not overlook the disproportionate barriers that some in our communities face and the need to help Oregon become a more inclusive, tolerant place for ALL Oregonians to live and work. Passing House Bill 4004, is an important step to help ensure access to justice through adequate and quality legal representation regardless of income, is critical to fixing our broken justice system.

Oregonians have a constitutional right to legal representation. But right now, Oregonians are entering courtrooms without the aid of a lawyer who has the time, ability and resources to present an effective defense, leaving them more likely to be unfairly charged, detained and potentially deported. This constitutional violation creates immense harm for low-income Oregonians, who are disproportionately people of color as a result of historic and systemic racism.

House Bill 4004 will help create more manageable caseload standards for public defenders and a more representative Public Defense Service Commission.

On behalf of the hardworking Oregonians and their families, we thank you for your attention to this issue and look forward to working together towards solutions that will make our state a leader in equity and inclusiveness. The Oregon AFL-CIO respectfully urges the committee to support HB 4004.