

**To: House Rules Committee**  
**From: Cristina Nieves, Common Cause Oregon**  
**Re: Racial Impact (HB 2353, HB 2991, HB 2993)**  
**Date: March 2, 2021**

### **Common Cause**

Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization that works for open, honest, accountable government. We are over one million Americans – including roughly 30,000 Oregonians – working together to realize the unfinished promise of democracy.

### **HB 2353, HB 2991, HB 2993**

Thank you for taking testimony from Common Cause as you consider these three bills addressing racial impacts of legislation and increasing impacted communities' ability to engage in the legislative process in the legislative process:

[HB 2353](#), Requires agency to include in rulemaking notice statement identifying how adoption of rule will affect racial equity

[HB 2991](#), Requires Legislative Policy and Research Director or chief sponsor of bill or proposed constitutional amendment to prepare racial and ethnic impact statement

[HB 2993](#), Requires agency to appoint advisory committee to represent interests of persons likely to be affected by proposed rule

### **Common Cause supports all three bills.**

We respectfully offer these comments:

#### **A successful democracy is based on equity and access.**

Common Cause believes that democracy is based on everyone's right and ability to engage in crucial decision-making of our elected and public officials. This means removing barriers to participation, acknowledging the impact on groups that will be most directly affected – especially those that have been historically disenfranchised – and amplifying the ability of these groups to participate through changes in policy. HB 2353, HB 2991, and HB 2993 each address both the need to improve the internal legislative process and the public's ability to access it.

#### **As we know, implementation is the true test of good policy.**

In an effort implement the promises of improving access and equity, many municipalities (such as the City of Portland) have already adopted similar policies and practices. Some lessons learned from implementation:

- Make sure that racial equity statements are specific and require enough information for the public to understand the actual impact
- Use an equity lens when selecting members of an advisory committee of those likely to be impacted by proposed rule

**Holding true to our values and increasing opportunity for engagement will build the public's trust in the system while helping to achieve better public policy.**

As our state government pushes further towards true equity and inclusion, requiring a racial impact statement for legislation and empowering the public to participate are both tested measures that will help communities trust that the dedication to equity is genuine and can be assessed.

**Thank you again for considering this testimony. We urge your support for these bills.**