

Partners in Diversity

March 2, 2021

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government, Senator Jeff golden and Representative Greg Smith, Co-Chairs

Re: OACO 2021-2023 Budget

I served for two terms of three years on OCAPIA the first four as co-chair and the last two years as chair. It was a pleasure to serve and help improve the lives of all Asians and Pacific Islanders in our state.

I am writing today in support of HB5501 the Oregon Advocacy's budget.

The OAC has been an important partner of Partners In Diversity over the years to help change policies that have not served our communities of color well.

Partners In Diversity worked with OCAPIA on research which led to the passage of SB855, a bill that requires the licensure boards to find pathways for immigrants and refugees with advanced degrees from foreign universities to get recredentialed, in 2019. With out the research and help of the advocacy commissions, this bill that helps thousands of people would not have passed.

The OAC is advocating for an increase in their budget to add much needed staff. There is a growing need for the work the OAC and all its commissioners do for the betterment of Oregon's growing multicultural population.

I urge this committee to properly fund the OAC so efforts to advance equity in this state can be accomplished.

Sincerely,

Mari Watanabe

Former chairperson, Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs
Executive Director of Partners In Diversity