

Hello members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government

Thank you for allowing us a safe, virtual, testimony option. I want to speak in support of funding the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office budget request. The budget request is very reasonable, adding an additional 1.5 FTE in order to undertake critical work. This additional funding will help to enable Oregon to achieve the **statutory mandate** to support the four OACs.

On the heels of Black History Month, it should come as no surprise that Oregon has work to do when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion. Oregon's history of White Supremacy and exclusion has lasting impacts which are still felt today. In my work at the intersections of immigrant and refugee communities, BIPOC communities, and with communities experiencing poverty, I have seen the effects of this legacy. The OACO and the OACs are doing important work to help us begin to address and cure the past.

The OACs focus on underrepresented communities, and it is important to fully fund the agency that supports these community volunteer commissioners so that they may do their work. To do otherwise is to fail our bare minimum obligations to improve our state in this arena, but it is also a moral failure. Think of the alternative! Oregon could lead in undertaking this essential work to build a just and equitable society.

In order to have real and meaningful change, we must properly invest in the OACO and the OACs. Please fully support this budget proposal.

Thank you for your time,

Annie Naranjo-Rivera