

**Kate Brown**  
Governor



**Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs**

“Advocating Equality and Diversity”

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Testimony in support, [HB 2368](#)

House Committee on Education, Tuesday, March 9, 2021, 1 pm

Dear Chair Alonso León, Co-Chairs Neron and Weber, and Representatives Hudson, Owens, Reardon, Ruiz, Brock Smith, Sollman, and Wright:

The Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA), in its statutory role of bringing equity focus and community voice into Oregon policy making, strongly supports HB 2368. This bill builds on a successful pilot that was first funded by the 2015 legislature. That pilot demonstrated very positive outcomes in terms of school success. However, a pilot with emphasis on equity is needed that would add protocols and technical assistance that would specifically address issues of equity.

HB 2368 represents that new effort and comes directly from legislative recommendations of the first seminal study of the needs of Latino mental health in 30 years, released this year by OCHA, OHA, and ODHS. The 190 page study, [Crisis de Nuestro Bienestar: A Report on Latino Mental Health In Oregon](#), shows among its findings the critical role our schools play in mental health access for Oregon’s youth. The report focused specifically on the mental health needs of Oregon’s Latino/a/x population. With almost one fourth of our states k12 population being Latino/a/x, this bill will not only serve them, but also the BIPOC population and the general population as well.

We anticipate amendments from the Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Health Authority that will assure equity goals are met and in full alignment with Oregon plans for Mental and Behavioral Health..

The fiscal that this bill will incur is justified by the fact that intervention of the type this bill would bring to our schools has proven to enhance school success. With school success we can anticipate a greater number of Oregon’s youth continuing their education into trade programs, community colleges, and our four-year institutions. As we already know, higher education increases the possibilities of higher life-time incomes. Thus, the long term effect of this bill will be to assure a workforce competent and capable to meet the future needs of our state.

It is my pleasure to have participated in the workgroups of the policy study and to join OCHA’s testimony with partners statewide in support of a bill that will make a difference for BIPOC Communities and all Oregonians.

Dr. Joseph Gallegos, Commissioner

Ashely Espinoza Valdez, Commissioner

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