

Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Hayden, and Salinas and Members of the Committee,

COVID-19 brought to light the disparities within our communities of color, especially in matters of health equity. Those of us working on narrowing the equity gap know that by lifting those most impacted and burdened, we are strengthening the whole community. As we continue learning with a hard lesson, a virus does not discriminate. Neither will the next man-made or natural emergency.

We must strengthen our health systems by expanding health coverage today. No one can, nor should, afford to face life or the next emergency lacking health insurance. It is our ethical and moral duty to not turn a blind eye to this issue, to lift barriers that burden our communities, especially undocumented communities, and you are in the position to ensure such change.

We need investments like those made in HB 3352 to counteract these historic systems of inequity, and we urgently ask you to allow more Oregonians to live a healthy life which everyone benefits from.

Thank you for the attention to this testimony and for the work you do on behalf of your constituents.

My sincere regards,  
Fernanda Wilent