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April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Esteemed State Representatives,

*Talofa lava* (Greetings in Samoan), my name is Manumalo S. Ala'ilima, and I identify as *fa'atane*, which means in the manner of a man in Samoan and as a *QTPI*, Queer and Transgender Pacific Islander. I am a co-founder and co-chair of UTOPIA PDX (United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance Portland), and we provide sacred spaces to strengthen the minds and bodies of QTPIs – Queer and Transgender Pacific Islanders – through community organizing, political engagement and cultural stewardship. We formed in April 2017 borne out of the lack of programming or outreach for Pacific Islanders in the greater LGBTQ+ community, lack of leadership roles of LGBTQ+ voices in the greater Pacific Islander community and ensure protection and advocacy for our vulnerable intersectional identity being part of both already marginalized communities. We became a 501©3 non-profit organization in April 2018.

UTOPIA PDX enthusiastically lends our full support of House Bill 3159: REAL-D (Race Ethnicity and Language and Disability) and SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) Data Collection and Reporting. One of our priorities listed as our first commitment that is clearly stated in our Bylaws is “*To document and address disparities in areas of health, employment and education particular to QTPI communities*”. This implies that we have adequate resources for research means and methodologies to collect accurate data. It is important for UTOPIA PDX to be as best informed about what our community has experienced, is experiencing and how to address their needs appropriately and that is directly tethered to research and data collection methods. In 2019, UTOPIA PDX was a partner organization with Multnomah County Health Department’s Pacific Islander Data Project Series and helped coordinate the first workshop of the series featuring Sexual Health and Gender Identity. During the pandemic, we have developed intake forms for COVID-19 response and relief work capturing REAL-D and SOGI data of who is experiencing hardship and who we have been able to serve. This has been a helpful and useful tool in identifying the needs and concerns for various demographics within the Pacific Islander and QTBIPOC (Queer and Transgender Black, Indigenous and other People of Color) community members that we have served.

Per the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) publications of their COVID-19 Weekly Data Reports since April 2020, Pacific Islanders have had the highest rates of infection, hospitalization and death among all races in Oregon and sadly is true even still to this present day. The Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition (OPIC) convened in April 2020 to help organize the statewide COVID-19 response and relief effort for our community consisting of 10 Pacific Islander community-based organizations as well as community



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members and clinicians to help guide and build an infrastructure for our collective work. We would not even know about this vital and sobering information without the data collected from our LPHAs, PPOs, testing labs, department of human services etc. indicating the data of who, where, how and why COVID-19 has impacted our community that led to the greater question of how we will then respond accordingly. But much of the data points have a large unaccounted portion for “Other” or as the default if no identifying demographic is selected. That is too large of a portion to be satisfied with in not knowing.

UTOPIA PDX’ commitment to seeing that our vulnerable communities’ information is being counted and captured respectfully and accurately has led to our fiscal sponsorship of OPIC. OPIC in partnership with OHA has launched the Pacific Islander Data Modernization Project Series in hopes to close these gaps in how data and research are being conducted and collected in our community. We are receiving such rich and crucial input and feedback that is rarely ever asked of us, especially about our needs, concerns and desires. We are on the right track and making good strides. And we can even account for more accurate information with better support if that was more consistent and implemented a better way to hold accountable and apply a consequence for when the law is violated, and one is found to be non-compliant. This ensures a mitigating measure for better compliance for reaching the goals of REAL-D and SOGI data collection and proper reporting of that.

Respectfully submitted,

Manumalo S. Ala’ilima, Co-Chair