



April 7, 2021

RE: HB 3159 “The Data Justice Act”

Alii, Tirow, Hafa Adai, Iakwe, Ran Anim, Kasalelei, Malo 'e lelei, Aloha and Talofa,

The Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition (OPIC) writes this letter in support of The Data Justice Act (HB 3159). OPIC is a growing collective of Pacific Islander organizations and leaders across the State of Oregon organizing on the frontline of COVID-19 response. OPIC is all too familiar with the fatal impacts of having critical data on our health be obscured by aggregate categories such as “Asian/ Asian American Pacific Islander” or completely erased by a lack of thoughtful data collection and reporting on our racial and ethnic identities.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on Pasifika people, where we have consistently been at the top of COVID-19 case, hospitalization, and fatality rates since Oregon Health Authority first released weekly COVID-19 reports disaggregated by race and ethnicity in April of 2020. COVID-19 data continues to highlight the consequences of poor access to the social determinants of health amongst Pacific Islanders and the lack of culturally competent and accessible healthcare. We as Pacific Islanders could not afford to be invisible pre-pandemic, and we most certainly cannot tolerate it now.

Providers must be invested in and accountable to data collection that tells a thoughtful story on what BIPOC communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, people with disabilities and those living at the many intersections of identity need to live healthy, thriving lives. The Data Justice Act is our opportunity to not just measure the negative impacts of racism and other forms of bias, but to ensure this work no longer lives on the forgotten margins of healthcare. We need Data Justice NOW!

Sincerely,

Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition

Ka ‘Aha Lāhui ‘O ‘Olekona Hawaiian Civic Club

Le’o ‘o e OFA

Living Islands

Micronesian Islander Community

Samoan Pacific Development Corporation

United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance, Portland Chapter