

Isabela Villarreal
333 SE 2nd Ave.
Portland, OR 97214
RE: Support HB 3021



April 13th, 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and members of the House Rules Committee,

My name is Isabela Villarreal, I use she/her pronouns, and I am the Policy and Communications Manager at Next Up Action Fund. As an organization that builds political power and strong, effective leadership pipelines for diverse young people, our work and our communities are greatly impacted by language accessibility in our electoral systems; because of this, we are here today in strong support for HB 3021, The Language Access Bill.

Currently, there are more than 200,000 Oregonians in our state who are considered to have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). According to census data we have dozens of languages spoken throughout regions of the state, yet not enough resourcing is given to reach voters in the languages they understand in a meaningful way. Everyone should be able to participate in our political process, and providing voter information only in English disenfranchises thousands of Oregon voters. We're long overdue for creating important voting materials in other languages, and luckily, this is a straightforward problem that we have the power to fix with HB 3021.

Specifically, the -2 amendment of this bill includes some critical pieces that ensure a process is laid out to support the Secretary of State and counties. This includes essential information about voting, including non-partisan information about voting in Oregon, ballot Measures and campaigns of statewide impact, lending to statewide candidates the opportunity to submit their translations to be published in pamphlets, and city and county candidates.

We believe voters should be able to access information about the issues that are of importance to them and to their communities in the language they are most comfortable. Ensuring adequate access to language materials in the languages voters understand is a key element of a fair, effective, and responsive election system in Oregon.

HB 3021 takes a step in the right direction by harnessing the power of Oregon's motor voter law to collect data that will allow the SOS and county elections offices across the state to better serve all Oregon voters.

Thank you,

Isabela Villarreal
Policy and Communications Manager