



April 14, 2021

**Testimony of Leland Baxter-Neal, Director of Advocacy
In Support of HB 5012
Joint Committee on Ways and means
Subcommittee on Public Safety**

Dear Chairs Gorsek, Sollman, and members of the committee,

Latino Network appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 5012. Oregon's court system is an institution that must be equally and equitably accessible to all Oregonians, regardless of race, nationality, immigration status, level of economic power, or physical or mental ability.

We urge this committee to support full funding for the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) so that it can continue to do the necessary work to remove barriers and strengthen equitable access to justice in Oregon. To that end, Latino Network also wishes to voice our strong support for Policy Option Package #101 Ensuring Equitable Outcomes.

Latino Network is a culturally specific nonprofit serving Latinx youth and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Our organization provides transformative services to more than 8,000 Latinx youth, families, and community members in multiple areas including education, family stability, housing support, juvenile justice, legal navigation, and advocacy.

For many Black, Indigenous, Latinx, immigrant and refugee Oregonians, and other communities of color, Oregon's court system can play an outsized role in their lives. It is well documented that criminal enforcement in Oregon disproportionately targets and impacts communities of color. This is true at every step through the criminal legal system – from initial police contact, to charging decisions, to sentencing, and post-incarceration programming. Many other aspects of the courts, including civil court and family court, also play a tremendous import in the lives of the community that Latino Network serves.

Yet, like many Oregonians, our community faces barriers to equal and equitable access to our courts and to justice. That is why it is critical that OJD engage in the work to identify and address these barriers and that it be adequately funded to do so. Policy Option #101 would provide funding to collect, track, and analyze data intended to measure these disparate impacts. While this alone is not sufficient, it is very much necessary to achieving our goals.

Latino Network has had the opportunity to work with the Oregon Judicial Department to address some of these barriers. A prime example is the work to address warrantless civil immigration arrests on Oregon's courts, which have disproportionately targeted BIPOC Oregonians and have chilled participation in court proceedings. We appreciate OJD's engagement in that process and the collaborative efforts to find an effective response to these unlawful arrests. This effort resulted in Uniform Trial Court Rule 3.190, issued in November of 2019, which prohibits warrantless civil immigration arrests in and around Oregon's courts.

Much work remains ahead. We are confident of OJD's commitment to engaging in this work alongside community partners. We urge this committee to fully fund the department so that budgetary constraints do not hinder OJD in working toward a day when justice in Oregon is equal and equitable for all.

Thank you kindly for this opportunity,

Leland Baxter-Neal
Latino Network
Director of Advocacy