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Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, Rayfield and Members of the Committee,

We write to express our strong support of Gresham's request for funding outreach, prevention and intervention services for youth and families in Gresham. Latino Network is an active and engaged partner in addressing the needs of Latinx youth and families in east county and Gresham. Currently Latino Network is serving 1252 participants in the Gresham/Rockwood area. Longstanding systemic barriers coupled with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have disproportionately and negatively affected the physical, social, and economic wellbeing of our youth, families and community. Propelled by these difficult realities, and with added urgency as the incidence of community violence rises, we must act now.

Investing in relationships, providing alternatives to violence, and intervening with the resources families need – these are the strategies that work and make an ongoing impact. With Gresham's unique role as a convener, and with a right-sized investment in services, organizations like Latino Network will be able to work together more effectively to meet the community's needs. It will change lives.

The Oregon Legislative Assembly has an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of investing in upstream services as a way to improve public safety outcomes and impact the quality of life for those in need. Thank you for considering this critical funding request.

Sincerely,

Tony DeFalco
Executive Director