

Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, and Rayfield, and Vice Co-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith.

My name is Ira Cuello-Martinez and I live in Salem, which is in Congressional District 5. I am here today to testify in support of HB 2819, and a continued investment in the Oregon Worker Relief Fund, which are included as priority items in The People's Budget.

The Oregon Worker Relief Fund provides direct financial support to Oregonians who have lost income as a result of the pandemic yet are ineligible for Unemployment Insurance and federal stimulus relief due to their immigration status. I remember working closely with families across the state and hearing the heartbreaking stories of hunger, houselessness, and economic hardship. Fully funding the Oregon Worker Relief Fund would give direct financial support to workers who need access to a financial safety net now.

I also ask you to support HB 2819 because all workers no matter their place of origin should be able to earn enough to care for their families.

- HB 2819 allows all income-eligible workers in Oregon to claim the state's EITC, regardless of how they file their taxes.
- This bill has the potential to impact over 34,000 Oregon families—predominantly Latinx and Asian Americans—who file their taxes using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

These priorities matter to me personally because I know the struggle of growing up in a low-income and mixed status household. Accessing the EITC would have made a significant impact on my family's life as we often had to make difficult decisions due to our socioeconomic status. And I know there are many families who are in similar situations, who try to follow the rules and report our earnings to the IRS, yet are being denied access to reaping the benefits. Countless families wondering how they'll make it through without access to unemployment or any federal stimulus relief.

I believe that Oregon's economic recovery should help those who were hurt most by COVID-19 and the corresponding recession. Primarily Oregonians who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color, women; immigrants; and/or LGBTQ+. The state should make investments that are rooted in racial, gender, and economic justice. By prioritizing the policies included in The People's Budget, you will build an equity-based budget that ensures Oregon emerges stronger than before.

Thank you,
Ira Cuello-Martinez