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Keizer, Oregon  
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Attn: Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, and Rayfield; Vice Co-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith; and members of Oregon's Joint Committee on Ways & Means

Good afternoon Chair and Members of Oregon's Joint Committee on Ways & Means.

As members of Oregon's Ways & Means Committee, I am calling on you to support HB 2819, and continued investment in the Oregon Worker Relief Fund. These are high priority items in The People's Budget.

The Oregon Worker Relief Fund is crucial for our communities for the reason that it provides financial support directly to our tax paying Oregonians who have lost their jobs due to pandemic circumstances and are otherwise ineligible for Unemployment Insurance and federal stimulus relief due to their immigration status.

I also ask you today to support HB 2819 because all workers, no matter their place of origin should be able to earn enough to care for their families since it will allow all income-eligible workers in Oregon to claim the state's EITC, regardless of how they file their taxes

HB 2819 means that 90,000 U.S. citizens living in mixed-status households in Oregon (mostly children) will benefit from the EITC. This bill has the potential to impact over 34,000 Oregon families who file their taxes using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

These priorities matter to me personally because as a local business owner who works with a community of entrepreneurs, I have seen firsthand how many of these contributing members of Oregon's economy get left behind. In Oregon it is legal to start and operate a business with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), this is great for many immigrant communities who's only means of income are to start a business from the trades or skills they developed in their former countries. However despite following the rules and paying their taxes, these folks are left disadvantaged when it comes to receiving financial assistance. Studies have shown that 8/10 businesses owned by people of color have not received any federal or state assistance during this pandemic.

Because of this The Oregon Worker Relief Fund took on the responsibility to fill this gap. The relief fund has provided a dire necessity for this community of agriculture workers and small business owners and in turn we have seen how these workers reinvest into themselves and their communities. Businesses have been able to keep doors open, workers have been able to cover losses and Oregon's economy continues to turn. The same goes with EITC for the reason that these workers and businesses can have more opportunity to reinvest in themselves, their businesses and their communities.

I believe that Oregon's economic recovery should help those who were hurt most by COVID-19 and our corresponding recession: primarily Oregonians who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color, women; immigrants; and/or LGBTQ+. We have seen how directly investing in our communities through programs like Oregon Worker Relief Fund and EITC open up more opportunities for economic growth and community development for those that need it.

By prioritizing the policies included in The People's Budget, you will build an equity-based budget that ensures Oregon and its economy emerges stronger than before and is ready to weather future storms. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to give feedback.

Thank you,