



4/29/2021

Chair Wagner and Co-Chair Girod, Members of the Committee,

My name is Reyna Lopez and I am the executive director of PCUN. I'm testifying today in support of SB 258 and SB 259.

PCUN's mission is to empower farmworkers and Latinx working families in Oregon, we center the voices of low-wage workers, immigrants, and bilingual/bicultural communities from Mexico and Central America residing in the Mid-Willamette Valley. In recent years, we have seen how our community in the Salem/Woodburn area has grown and flourished successfully thanks to the growth and development in the Latinx community - whether through young Latinx students and children - that now make up 44 percent of Salem Keizer School District - to the immigrant small businesses owners up and down Front Street in Woodburn, and Lancaster Drive in Salem. Today, nearly 1 in 3 residents of Marion County are Latinx.

PCUN has been organizing with our members for decades in Oregon. Together with our members, and the state legislature, we've been able to win driver's licenses, farmworker protections, and raise the minimum wage for Oregonians. We are an organized community, working with a network of Latino organizations throughout the valley - and were also engaged in the redistricting process the last time around.

But some of the policies that most impact our families and members are decided at the federal level. Whether it's the DREAM and Promise Act, comprehensive immigration reform, or the Farm Workforce Modernization Act - our community needs federal level policy change.

That's why the apportionment news from earlier this week could be a game changer. Oregon will be getting a sixth Congressional seat, and a chance to have more influence at the federal level. How we decide on this seat in Oregon will have an impact on whether the farmworker and Latinx community are truly represented in our Congressional delegation.

Representation matters, this is why PCUN cares deeply about this redistricting process. We're headquartered in Woodburn, which is a majority Latinx municipality, located in one of the few BIPOC majority house districts. We knew that the Census and redistricting would be a priority for us in 2020, and it's why we participated in the We Count Oregon outreach campaign - to ensure an accurate count in the census.

But we've faced barrier after barrier to the engagement of our community. From President Trump creating widespread fear in immigrant communities about a citizenship question on the Census, to COVID

affecting Census outreach, to having to do redistricting in a virtual legislative session--the barriers have been significant to true community engagement in a very technical and irregular process that only happens once every ten years.

That's why it is critical that the legislature do everything in its power to reduce these barriers and to ensure that our communities are engaged throughout this process. Aligning the congressional process to the timelines laid out by the Oregon Supreme Court will make it easier for communities like mine to participate and comprehend. SB 258 and SB 259 will help make this process more accessible and I urge the committee to vote yes.

Sincerely,

Reyna Lopez  
Executive Director  
PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union  
Woodburn, Oregon