

My name is Valdez Bravo. I am writing in support of SJR 12 from the perspective of a healthcare professional with 25 years of experience, as a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives, and as Vice President of Health Care for All Oregon.

An Oregon native of LatinX and Standing Rock Sioux descent, I was born at Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU) in 1977. Although my family lived in Salem, my mom lacked health care and OHSU allowed her to access maternity services knowing she lacked the ability to pay. Two years later, with the establishment of the Chemawa Indian Health Service Center in my hometown of Salem, my family was able to access primary care and dental services at Chemawa despite our inability to pay for health insurance. As a child, I was able to get the care I needed at times in my early life when I was faced with health challenges that my folks might not otherwise have been able to afford to treat.

At the age of 18, three weeks out of high school I joined the U.S. Army, in the hopes of adventure, learning a vocation, earning money for college, seeing the world, and serving the country that I love. I was fortunate enough to enlist as a Medical Equipment Repairman, working in Army hospitals for a little over eight years in the U.S., Germany, and with the 48th Combat Support Hospital in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. During these eight years as an active duty soldier, I received high-quality care from military physicians, nurses, and other care providers.

Following my Honorable Discharge from the Army in 2003, I went to work at OHSU. My life had come full circle - I felt a bit like a salmon returning to the place I was born! Six months later I joined the Department of Veterans Health Administration in May 2004. It was an honor to serve my fellow Veterans while proudly continuing my federal service as a public servant. Since then I have served in a variety of roles of increasing responsibility, ranging from Biomedical Engineering Supervisor and Chief to Lean Healthcare Transformational Coach to Primary Care Administrator. I now serve as the Chief Operating Officer of a VA in Southern Oregon. And as I like to say, "I'm not only an executive but I'm also a client." I proudly get my care, "the best care anywhere," from the VA.

Often times, the only reason that I had health care was because the government recognized health care as my right. Whether it was because of my status and eligibility as a Native American, as an active duty soldier, or now as a Veteran, the government has always ensured that I had the care I need to thrive as a human right.

I want to ensure that all of us have the health care we need to thrive. Because I believe health care is a human right. I believe everyone should be able to access the care they need regardless of their age, race, employment status, military service, zip code, or ability to pay.

This is why I support SJR 12. SJR 12 will add needed language to the Constitution which establishes health care as a human right. Oregon has led the way in transformative health care reform across the years. When I was in Texas, earning my dual masters in healthcare administration and MBA, I was so proud when our faculty would highlight Oregon as a leader in medical marijuana, the Oregon Health Plan, death with dignity, and other advances in terms of forward-leaning health care innovations.

I believe it is time for Oregon to lead again and I encourage the Senators to please support the passage of SJR 12. "Everybody in—Nobody out!"

Thank you so much for listening.

Respectfully,

Valdez G. Bravo, FACHE
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Vice President of Health Care for All Oregon