



5/12/2021

House Committee on Rules

Testimony House Bill 2680 (Re: -1)

Chair and House Democrat Leader, Barbara Smith Warner, Vice-Chair and House Republic Leader Christine Drazen; Vice-Chair Paul Holvey, and Members of the Committee;

PCUN is Oregon's Farmworker Union, we've registered 7,000 Members - with a mission of empowering farmworker communities through organizing, systems change, and advocacy. Part of that work does in fact entail getting involved in the electoral process. Our goal is to continue to bring bilingual voting information, and recommendations to farmworker communities, many of whom are Latinx, new citizens, first time voters who need a culturally competent approach.

In order to ensure we continue to build that trust - PCUN endorses candidates, with the central question of whether they support some of the most pertinent farmworker issues of our time. As you know - the average life expectancy of a farmworker is about 49 years of age. This is why it's so important that we educate leaders about these statistics, and build relationships through PCUN's engagement in campaigns. Most of our campaign engagement occurs through our 501c4 organization, Accion Politica PCUNista (dba PCUN).

PCUN supports HB 2680, we'd like to also highlight areas in the new -1 amendments that are important to keep, and other places we should move forward with caution.

- We support the \$50,000 capped contributions for in-kind support to individual candidate PACs, and it's vital that we maintain our ability to in-kind support for candidates in Oregon. This has proved to be a great way to support BIPOC candidates, as well as candidates who do not have a plan to reach marginalized voters.
- We'd like to point out that we would be concerned with any of that work only pertaining to "existing" staff time at our organizations. PCUN brings on a small team of organizers each election cycle to reach Latinx voters - usually our programs reach spanish speaking voters, and we would not have the ability to keep these staff on permanently otherwise - because PCUN's primary function is not voter outreach, but rather general community and workplace organizing of farmworkers and Latinx working families.

As the field Director at PCUN my work would be directly impacted by only having "existing" staff time help with the in kind candidate work we do. Right now, we have a team of 6 people working on the ground to reach Latinx voters. Without the support of seasonal electoral staff- the work we do to get out the vote and make sure BIPOC Oregonians participate in our civic duty would be impossible. Latinx Oregonians look to organizations like ours- who are doing voter outreach to make their decision on who

to vote for. Currently, our team has been working on the Salem-Keizer School Board elections- where 3.59% of Latinx voters have turned their ballot in so far. Although not a large share, so far, this is the highest of any year previously for a Salem-Keizer school board election. We believe that progress is large part to the work our temporary staff has done thus far in elections and supporting BIPOC candidates.

Thank you for your consideration.

April Alvarez
Field Director
PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union