



---

**May 13, 2021**

**Testimony of Leland Baxter-Neal, Director of Advocacy  
In Support of HB 2680 (Re: -1)  
House Committee on Rules**

Dear Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and Members of the House Committee on Rules,

Latino Network appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2680 and the -1 amendments.

Latino Network is a culturally specific nonprofit serving Latinx youth and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Our organization provides transformative services to more than 8,000 Latinx youth, families, and community members in multiple areas including education, family stability, housing support, juvenile justice, legal navigation, and advocacy.

Latino Network also works to advance social justice issues in Oregon by supporting marginalized communities in engaging directly in our democracy. This has meant working to empower the Latinx community and working to support Black, Indigenous, Asian, Pasifika, and other communities of color in breaking down barriers and building power. This work led the organization to establish the Latino Network Action Fund, a 501(c)(4) organization (referred to as a "C4").

The Oregon Legislature today is more representative of the communities it serves than it has ever been before. This is no accident. Communities that have long faced barriers to political participation are breaking those barriers down and broadening participation in political institutions, for the benefit of *all* Oregonians. As a result, and as evidenced this session, we are addressing inequities in health, education, housing, public safety, and other areas with meaningful solutions driven by the communities who are most impacted. This is good for democracy and for our state.

It is critical that, as we take much needed steps to limit the influence of big money in politics and create more accountability and transparency in elections, we not suppress the ability of long-marginalized communities to advance candidates from their communities and to effectively advocate for their collective well-being.

Latino Network deeply appreciates the efforts made to engage our organization and other organizations that have established C4s to advance the rights of marginalized communities. We wish to thank Rep. Rayfield and staff for prioritizing outreach to our organizations. The

-1 amendments to HB 2680 incorporate critical feedback and concerns that we and others have raised. We want to emphasize the following elements in the -1 amendments that are critical to our support:

- A definition of “membership organization” that removes barriers to participation for organizations like the Latino network Action Fund and other emerging C4s.
  - A narrow definition of “membership” tied exclusively to paying economic dues would disadvantage organizations that represent marginalized communities by continuing to limit political power based on the economic power of a particular community.
  - Rather, the “membership” definition must recognize that C4s representing Black, Indigenous and other communities of color engage with and represent the interests of their communities without requiring regular dues from those they represent. The organizational membership definition included in the -1 strikes the appropriate balance.
- Maintaining the ability of C4s to provide meaningful in-kind support.
  - Staff in-kind support is an essential way that community-based organizations can meaningfully participate in elections. Emerging C4s often do not have significant cash resources but can work to support candidates by dedicating staff time to supporting campaigns. This is key for creating connection and accountability between communities and candidates.
  - The -1 amendments preserve the ability for groups to be able to provide meaningful in-kind staff support while also placing reasonable cap of \$50,000 on in-kind staff time. In-kind contributions cannot be limited based on the numbers of members without an alternative total cap, as this would impose significant barriers emerging C4s representing historically marginalized communities. And any cap needs to allow organizations to provide meaningful in-kind support while paying their staff a living wage.

The -1 amendments to HB 2680 balance limiting the influence of big money in politics and bringing more transparency and accountability to elections while also making sure that we can build a more inclusive democracy that provides Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) and working Oregonians with a greater voice. The -1 amendments are the result of a process that included organizations that work on the behalf of communities that have been historically and purposefully excluded from the institutions and tables making decisions that impact their lives.

Thank you kindly for this opportunity,

**Leland Baxter-Neal**  
**Latino Network**  
**Director of Advocacy**