

HB 2935 in support
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
May 17, 2021 at 8am, virtual meeting

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, Senators Dembrow, Gelser, Heard, Linthicum and Manning Jr.,

My name is Irma Linda Castillo and I am Chair of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA). The OCHA's role is to work toward economic, social, political, and legal equity for Oregon's Latino/a/x population. We do this through advocacy, public policy research, leadership development and partnerships. I am in support of HB 2935.

This bill asks us to respect Oregon's multiculturalism, seek accommodations, new policies and/or waivers for our diverse communities who have cultural hairstyles, or wear religious dress, and conservative clothing. Adult and youth sporting events must rectify issues of historic inequity and exclusion by following legal non-discrimination laws and offer accommodations, better yet, the elimination of exclusionary rules. Accepting cultural and religious communities' norms and dress, whether it is a Muslim woman wearing a hijab, or headscarf, or wearing a burkini on the swim team; a Black person competing with natural hair; a Sikh wrestler who competes in a turban; or a Native man who wears a long braid; welcomes diversity and ends systemic racism and bias. Sports have exposed the many faces of racial and religious discrimination and systems that have supported these exclusionary and humiliating practices. Many of us have seen the heartbreaking video of Andrew Johnson, a high school wrestler, forced to cut his dreadlocks as choice between his hair and forfeiting a match. It is a humiliating and anguish-filled moment to witness and endure.

Noor Alexandria Abuokaram, a 16 y/o cross-country runner was disqualified from a 5k race because she ran in a hijab. She said, "It is not a game. It is a person's life. We can't just move on." She and many others underscore how personal these exclusionary practices are, and they require policy and regulation changes such as those identified in HB 2935. No one should need a waiver to stay true to their faith, express their cultural identity or observe their cultural modesty beliefs. The fact that these differences have been deemed unacceptable and illegal is racism and discrimination in action. In Oregon we can do better. We can learn from and change these practice to codify welcoming all athletes and participants in their total and authentic identities.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 2935.

Sincerely,



Irma Linda Castillo

