

Submitter: Itzel Chavez Gomez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: HB4112

Hello, my name is Itzel Chavez Gomez and I work at Adelante Mujeres as the College and Career Coordinator for the Chicas Youth Development Program. I come to you today to advocate for professional development opportunities for Oregon educators as they implement Ethnic Studies standards in K-12 schools.

Through my line of work, I have been fortunate to work with Latinas as young as 3rd grade all the way through college to support them as they navigate the complexities of growing up in Oregon as Latinas. From academic guidance to personal mentorship, my role allows me to wear several hats all with the mission of supporting Latina youth in their education and feel empowered in their lives.

My support for HB 4112 goes beyond my professional work. I am first generation Latina and the product of the Oregon school system. During my primary and secondary education, I attended 6 different schools and graduated from the International School of Beaverton in 2013. In 2018 I earned my bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon. For me, learning about Latinxs in the U.S. came when I was 21 years old and I actively decided to enroll in an Ethnic Studies course in college. Growing up I never had a teacher who looked and sounded like me or let alone who had the same lived experiences as me, and this had a significant impact on my personal identity and development. Latinidad only existed within my home, never in any of my 6 schools—it stopped once I walked outside. And while some might not see the effect this has on youth, imagine growing up in a world where all you're taught about your people, about your history, is what you see on the news, what you hear in politics, and what you hear in casual conversation.

What HB 4112 means for the Latinas I work with, for the community we are a part of, is that we will finally have equipped staff in schools who can correctly teach us about our shared histories, about the impact Black and Brown people have had and continue to have in this country. A comprehensive education that highlights the diversity within this country and the significant impacts and contributions people of all identities have made. Voting YES to HB 4112 will make it so future Oregon students don't have to wait 21 years to finally understand who they are in this world and why they matter

Thank you.