

Submitter: George Carrillo

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure: SB850

As the executive director of LatinoBuilt, former executive at the Oregon Health Authority, community activist, and Latino, I have witnessed firsthand how Oregon's government continues to struggle with implementing equitable policies and laws. The Latino community is the largest minority group in Oregon. We account for almost 20% of the total population, more than 50% of the construction workforce, and yet, less than 1% of Oregon's wealth. We are the majority in the construction workforce but lack in opportunity to grow within the industries because of oppressive systems in place.

We are easily taken advantaged of as we have limited avenues of accountability, but we push forward, we do more with less, and do so with little to no recognition of the contributions we commit to every day.

Our elected officials and government agencies must understand our struggles and how SB 850 is another barrier that does not help us a community. Senate Bill 850 would require the use of project labor agreements through labor unions. The intention of the bill is commendable as it's trying to protect workers that receive public funds, however, the impact on the Latino community will not align with the intent as there are serious current and ongoing issues within labor unions that must be addressed. Institutions throughout Oregon continue to struggle with implementing fair and equitable practices. As a state we are not yet up to par with bringing resolution to issues raised by the Latino workforce.

The lack of construction workforce development must be called out and learning institutions must be held accountable. Apprenticeship programs via labor unions throughout the state have an approximate 30% graduation rate, with less than 10% of it representing Latino men and less than 1% for Latina women. These graduation rates do not meet the need of this industry and do not offer an environment where Latino's want to participate.

For current Latino owned construction businesses, implementing SB 850 will require they convert their operations towards unions which comes at a high financial cost. SB 850 solely financially benefits labor unions and financially punishes and harms Latino owned construction businesses. SB 850 also gives unions more power without proper representation, silencing thousands of Latino voices instead of empowering them as the majority population within this workforce.

Implementing SB 850 and forcing Latino-owned construction businesses into unions

that lack the infrastructure will impact the lives of all Oregonians, as we will see continued workforce issues, major delays in completing projects, and most importantly the government will continue to oppress the Latino community. SB 850 translates to less Latinos being able to open and/or keep open their construction businesses, fewer opportunities to get into higher paying trades, and the perpetuation of generational poverty. SB 850 is an example of systemic oppression within our state law. As our state representatives I implore you to see past the cover letter of a bill and understand the impact of your decision on the Latino community. Passing SB 850 will be a testament to the inability to move past special interest groups and reinforcing discriminatory practices. As a loud advocate I promise to hold all branches of government accountable, especially if you continue to oppress the Latino community. For these reasons I am asking the legislature to vote NO on SB 850. Thank you.