

Submitter: LeeAnn O'Neill

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human
Services

Measure: HB5026

Co-Chairs Campos, Valderama, and members of the Joint Subcommittee on Human
Services,

I am the Vice President of the Latino Community Association and co-founder of
Asians and Pacific Islanders of Central Oregon.

The EITC and CTC Coalition supports HB5026, specifically the Tax Infrastructure
Grant Program in Self Sufficiency Programs. This program, which launched in 2022,
ensures low-income Oregonians, especially those with barriers to filing their taxes
such as Spanish speaking and immigrant Oregonians, have access to free tax
support so they can access the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax
Credit (CTC).

Oregon ranks near the bottom for uptake of the EITC nationally. The maximum EITC
is almost \$7000 for 2022 and the maximum Oregon EITC is nearly \$700. The Federal
Child Tax Credit is refundable up to \$1500 per child. These are significant dollars that
could support families on the path to self-sufficiency and economic mobility, but only
if families file their taxes and claim these benefits.

The Tax Infrastructure Grant Program provided critical investments for the Latino
Community Association to build and scale its current capacity to provide free bilingual
and culturally specific tax support to our local Latinx community in Central Oregon.
We received \$150k to cover our role in providing these services for the 2022 and
2023 tax seasons. This has enabled us to train five staff members to be certified
preparers and to put together a plan and procedures to expand free tax filing to
Redmond and Madras. We are partnering with AARP, which operates on a volunteer
model and has always fallen short providing access to Spanish-speaking Central
Oregonians. The ODHS funding is allowing us to complement their services with paid
positions and independent contractors under LCA to increase access across our
region. Our services in Prineville will be included and strengthened next year.

Sustainable investments in ODHS's Tax Infrastructure Grant Program is vital to the
long term success of our efforts to reach Spanish speaking Central Oregonians.

This is why I urge your yes vote on HB 5026. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

LeeAnn O'Neill (she/they)

Vice President

Board of Directors of the Latino Community Association