

Date: March 20, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means - Human Services Subcommittee

From: Evelyn McCoy-Harris (Seed of Faith Ministries)

RE: Support POP 406 of SB 5525

Dear Co-chair Campos, Co-chair Valderrama, Members of the Committee:

My name is Evelyn McCoy-Harris, VP Operations, Seed of Faith and I am writing in support of **SB 5525, particularly POP 406**, which will invest \$286 million in further modernizing our statewide public health system, including \$100 million to support community-based organizations.

The health inequities we see within Oregon are rooted in systemic oppression and structural barriers to health. If the state is to meet Oregon Health Authority's goal of eliminating health inequities by 2030, increased investments in Oregon's public health system must be made to not only address the long-standing need that exists in our communities today, but also prevent future crises and inequities from occurring. Supporting this request provides a key opportunity to uplift the health of all Oregonians by sufficiently funding our public health system to rectify years of underinvestment and injustice.

This investment is especially crucial for community-based organizations (CBOs) that continue to serve as a bridge to resources for many communities impacted by health inequities. CBOs are in a unique position to support the public health system as we have the trust and deepened relationships with community members that in turn provide key insights into the evolving needs of community members as well as potential effective solutions.

POP 406 will be instrumental in modernizing Oregon's public health system to one that is rooted in community and equity centered. While we recognize the Governor's proposal to add \$50 million, we urge you to support the full request of \$286 million, which is more aligned with the current need. This includes \$100 million to support the work of CBOs.

Seed of Faith Ministries is steep in Marion County, 25+ years, serving culturally specific, LGBTQIA+, aging people with disabilities, unsheltered, low income, under-resourced, domestic violence, and child abuse communities, providing transitional housing, sheltering services, food inequities, peer support services and wraparound support. We help bridge the service gap while amplifying the critical need for the health of Oregonians. Our organization has the capacity and a certified 35-bed shelter unoccupied because of lack of funding, while community is in need.

We urge you to support the full request of \$286 million requested in POP 406, including the \$100 million to fund CBOs, to improve our public health system and the health of millions of Oregonians. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Evelyn McCoy-Harris