



Re: Support for SB 1533, Expanding Language Access to the Oregon Voters' Pamphlet

February 9, 2024

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of SB 1533** to expand language access to the Oregon voters' pamphlet. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Deputy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations. Our mission includes addressing the socioeconomic disparities experienced by individuals, families, and communities of color; and to engage in collective action for social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice, and prosperity.

Participating in our elections affects the ability of communities of color, immigrants, and refugees to elect candidates that will champion issues that support their wellness and prosperity and reflect their values. The decisions of elected representatives impact every resident. These decisions have material consequences on how and whether our communities are able to access services, from housing and community health to transportation, and overall, whether they feel their voices are being heard in our government.

For years, we have heard from the communities we serve that many residents feel excluded from our system of elections. The barriers our communities face range from lack of multilingual access to lack of information about how our elections work. Our electoral system can already seem confusing and intimidating, and this is worsened when communities don't have access to materials in the language they are most comfortable or familiar with. We must ensure that we are providing language access to as many communities in Oregon as possible, especially as our state becomes even more diverse.

SB 1533 would expand the number of languages that the Oregon voters' pamphlet has to be translated into from a total of 5 to up to 10 languages other than English within each Oregon county that have at least 300 speakers. SB 1533 is a simple improvement to our elections that will have a great impact in encouraging more communities to vote by giving them access to the tools they need to do so in the language they understand best.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I urge you to support SB 1533 to help expand access to the Oregon voters' pamphlet in more of the languages that Oregonians need.

Thank you,

Jenny Lee
Deputy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color