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Dear Committee members

I strongly support HB 2076 for a number of important reasons:

1. I recognize that indigenous communities have valuable contributions to make. It is important to preserve the language, culture and knowledge of indigenous communities. Clear examples of those contributions are, for example, forest management practices which are now being revived, or important knowledge about medicinal plants. This does not include the rich oral traditions that transmit other forms of knowledge and wisdom.
2. Indigenous communities are over represented in areas such as agricultural work, which are vital parts of Oregon's economy. A healthy economy depends on a healthy population. Having trained interpreters in indigenous languages ensures that they get proper medical attention or representation before administrative bodies. This is important for the health and safety not only of indigenous communities, but the public at large.
3. Historically the US has created havoc in Central America by opposing democratically-elected governments and propping regimes that have engaged in horrendous crimes and destabilized the region. The problem continues to this day: one of the major reasons people are fleeing to the United States is because of the security crisis in Central America. Historically the US has also engaged in genocidal actions toward its own indigenous communities. It is time to invest in helping make indigenous communities whole again.
4. Investing in proper training and compensation of interpreters avoids serious mistakes in healthcare, administrative bodies and other areas, which end up being more costly in the long term.

For these and the party's belief in equity and social justice we strongly urge you to consider and pass HB 2076.

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