

Ricardo Dominguez-Canche
Latino Network
March 21, 2025

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chair McIntire, Vice-Chair Dobson, and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Ricardo Dominguez, and I am a Senior Program Manager with Latino Network. I am writing to you today as a reflection of my upbringing, having grown up in an environment marked by gang violence and drug use in my neighborhood. I am truly grateful for the guidance and support I received from after-school and summer programs, which provided me with a safe space to explore my potential. These programs opened my eyes to a better way of living, emphasizing academic success, cultural exploration, and activities I had never thought possible. Organizations like Latino Network, along with other culturally specific/responsive organizations, have played a significant role in allowing individuals like myself the opportunity to give back to our community and positively influence the lives of young people.

We sincerely appreciate the legislative leadership for introducing HB 2007 to address the pressing needs within our communities. However, we believe there are vital components missing that are essential for its success. Our experience working closely with students has shown us that a comprehensive approach is necessary—one that meets students at their current level, fosters individual connections and inspires a lifelong love of learning. Solely focusing on academic outcomes will not fully address the needs of the students who require intervention the most.

It's important to recognize that HB 2007 misses a crucial opportunity to truly engage families in a young person's educational journey, particularly in the area of literacy. Family involvement is essential; without it, we risk losing valuable support for our children. Oregon's Early Literacy Framework emphasizes this point, highlighting how interconnected elements work together to foster culturally responsive practices and effective reading strategies. It dedicates an entire section to the vital role families and communities play in reinforcing reading practices at home. By putting programs in community settings before and after school, we can make reading more accessible, familiar, and enjoyable for our young learners.

Please consider amending HB 2007 to enhance the prioritization of family engagement and foster partnerships with community-based organizations. By expanding investments in afterschool programs alongside summer learning initiatives, and re-evaluating realistic administrative rates, we can effectively remove barriers that currently limit both student and parental involvement.

Furthermore, I would like to express my support for the -1 amendment to HB 3039. The recent updates incorporate many valuable recommendations from the HB 4082 summer and afterschool workgroup. It is encouraging to witness the collaborative efforts between the

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legislature and the Governor's office in their pursuit of meaningful educational investments for our communities. Thank you for your consideration of these significant recommendations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Ricardo Dominguez-Canche