

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
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OCHA Testimony in support of HB 3777-1
April 7, 2017, 3 pm, HR D
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce

Chair Reardon and distinguished members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development, thank you for taking the time to hear HB 3337-1 today.

My name is Alberto Moreno; I am the Chair for the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs. I’m here today in support of HB 3337-1. I’m here supporting this bill because I want to see expanded opportunities for over 500,000 Latinos and other emerging communities.

I came and spoke in favor of Rep. Heard’s legislation in 2015, HB 3304, which directed the Landscape Contractors Board to develop a “real-skills test” and offer a Spanish language testing option. I was hopeful that my community could finally have equitable access to their chosen profession as licensed landscape professionals. Unfortunately, I was disappointed to learn that multiple sections of the test have a 100% failure rate. As you know, the Latino community is heavily involved in the landscape, nursery and agricultural industries and collectively hold vast knowledge in areas that would assist in their passage of this landscape contracting board test. But, despite some obvious issues with the method of testing candidates, this bill does not remove testing requirements or harm the landscape profession by allowing entry of new candidates.

Instead, this bill creates entry level opportunities for members of my community to own their own business where the provisional license holder can bid up to \$8,000 bid limit/per client/per year while they learn the trade and save money for the test. Remember, its minorities and disadvantaged Oregonians who are most vulnerable to the expensive licensure requirements. The Planting & Irrigation total costs for the Practical Skills Test is \$1,200. For many in my community who wish to enter their chosen profession of landscape contracting, the test is too cost prohibitive and onerous and many give up on their dreams of owning a licensed small business.

In closing, I support this bill because our communities can no longer accept being excluded from their chosen profession because of language or financial barriers. These emerging entrepreneurs have so much to offer the profession, the state, the economy, their neighborhoods and their families by providing a service they love, in an industry and state they love to serve.

Thank you for your time and attention, and please support this bill by holding a work session to move this onto the House Floor for full consideration.

Sincerely,

Alberto Moreno, Chair, Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs

OR Commission on Hispanic Affairs

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