

# ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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## **Testimony Opposing SB 424 Before the Senate Committee on Business, Transportation and Workforce Development by Kevin Finney, Public Policy Director February 22, 2007**

Chair Metsger and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify. For the record, I am Kevin Finney, the Public Policy Director for Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association made up of 17 Christian denominations, and numerous congregations, social ministries, and inter-religious organizations.

I am here today to urge you to oppose this legislation. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon thinks this legislation is premature and unnecessary. To the extent that this legislation is enacted to comply with the requirements of the Real ID Act, it may impose unnecessary costs and burdens on states and their citizens, raise real civil liberty concerns, and increase the risk of identity theft.

The immediate action of the Oregon Legislature at this time, regarding the Real ID Act, should be to pass a resolution urging Congress to repeal or fix this Act. This is appropriate because our system of federalism empowers states to resist dangerous, unfair or unjust federal requirements, and this ability of states to talk back to the federal government is an important resource in the defense of liberty.

To the extent that SB 424 is amended in such a way as to no longer bring the Oregon Vehicle Code into conformity with the Real ID Act, but merely to require proof of legal residence, we no longer see any pressing need at all for the act. It would merely impose new bureaucratic requirements on Oregon's citizens and the DMV while failing to meet the requirements of federal law, and in no way reducing the threat of terrorism. It divides our state's residents unnecessarily, and has the potential to turn our state DMV into an agent of oppression for our neighbors who have come thousands of miles simply to try and make a living for themselves and their families.

I would hope that, instead of taking that path, we would follow the wise counsel in Leviticus, that, "The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt." - Leviticus 19:33-34.

Under either approach, this legislation could require increased funding for the DMV, and those are funds that we at Ecumenical Ministries think could be much better spent on many other pressing needs such as reducing poverty, expanding health care access, or merely reducing the tax burden on working families through an expanded earned income tax credit.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this bill.

#### MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ American Baptist Churches ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon ■ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
■ Church of the Brethren ■ Community of Christ ■ Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon  
■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ■ Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbytery of the Cascades ■ Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church in Oregon  
■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches