

Honored senators,

My name is Amy C. Vaught and I am a legislative assistant to Senator Shemia Fagan. Today I am here as a private citizen and constituent of Senator Dembrow.

Thank you for considering my testimony on Senate Bill 933. SB 933 Requires that public bodies in Oregon allow a person to select multiple races or identities on forms asking for such information.

SB 933 seems like a small fix or technically, but, to those of us effected, this fix can mean the world. I grew up in Oregon the daughter of a white mother and a black father or, as I am usually delegated, "Other."

As an "Other," I am denied a crucial part of my identity, I am denied the dignity of belonging, of having a name, of being seen.

"Other" means an ugly decision whenever I am asked "what are you?"

"Other" is isolation.

"Other" is coming home in tears when a childhood teacher tells you that people like me just don't belong and haven't ever been full people.

"Other" is all the times I've been told that I'm not really black, just dirty.

I can't explain the total isolation that makes a child try and wash off her skin color so that she will just look like everyone else. I can't explain the desperation that, when baby wipes didn't work, led that younger version of me to find the bleach. Emotionally, physically, chemically, "Other" hurts.

Senators, you have the power to change that experience for a new generation of Oregonians. You have the power to give them, to give me, the right to be seen for who we are. I humbly ask that you support Senate Bill 933.

Thank you.