

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, OREGON

Office of the Mayor & City Council



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March 2, 2021

Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Committee On Judiciary & Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher & Members of the Committee,

The City of Springfield is a diverse community in which everyone should feel and be welcome. We want people to raise their families here and build a life here. Being a diverse city means there will be different viewpoints, ideas, and beliefs among our residents. And while we welcome that diversity, the City had made it clear that political violence is not welcome in Springfield, Oregon. White supremacy and white nationalism are not welcome in Springfield, Oregon.

As we focus our efforts to address racial justice in our community, the City of Springfield wants to share our support for SB 398, which establishes the crime of intimidation by the display of a noose as a Class A misdemeanor. The bill is modeled after other state laws that have withstood court challenges on First Amendment grounds. Also, the penalty in the bill parallels the penalty for a second-degree bias crime while not amending the existing bias crime statutes.

According to the NAACP, "the hangman's noose has been used both directly and symbolically throughout American history to racially lynch, kill, terrorize and threaten African Americans, other racial or ethnic minority Americans and their allies, eventually ushering in the very birth of the NAACP." In America, the noose represents an appalling act of brutality and banning the symbol is one part of the overall effort to dismantle racism in Oregon. .

We urge you to support SB 398.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean VanGordon". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sean VanGordon
Mayor, City of Springfield