



My name is Dr. Yvette M. Alex-Assensoh. Currently, I serve as Professor of Political Science and the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion at the University of Oregon; professionally, I am also a member of the Oregon and Indiana State Bar Associations. This testimony is in my personal capacity. Indeed, I very strongly support the immediate passage of SB 683 because it seeks to educate about and intervene in anti-black discrimination, which unfortunately has a peculiar and pervasive history in the State of Oregon and, more generally, in America.

Unfortunately, silence about the anti-black racism in Oregon and beyond has emboldened perpetrators of this behavior. Oregon students' lack of knowledge in the area of Black History has reinforced false notions that black people are either inferior or are deserving of second-class citizenship. While the complaints of Black Oregonians, who have been calling attention to these unfortunate issues for decades should have been enough, the spike in hate crimes in recent years should confirm that anti-Blackness in Oregon is an issue of emergency proportions, which need immediate solution.

In the 2019 book, *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think and Do*, authored by Jennifer Eberhardt, a MacArthur Fellow and Stanford Professor, explains that children -- as young as five-year-old -- recognize and understand racial discrimination against black people. Furthermore, University of Chicago Psychologist Margaret Beale Spencer, in a 2010 study of children ages 4 to 5 and 9 to 10years old, respectively, underscored that while all kids are exposed to stereotypes, white children are maintaining the stereotypes much stronger than black children.

As a lifelong educator, who also values the social science implications of the Eberhardt and Spencer studies, respectively, I strongly support the immediate passage of SB 683. Such education is especially needed in our State of Oregon, which is the only State in the Union to pass anti-Black exclusion laws. The proposed law SB683 will provide much-needed protection for black people, while also providing all children with a road map and tool for equity and fairness that will position them for a more promising future. Therefore, we need to use all the tools, at our disposal, to protect the innocent people and, in essence, to root this unfortunate culture out of the State. Most certainly, SB 683 is one of the needed tools, and we must pass the proposed bill without delay!

Sincerely,


Yvette M. Alex-Assensoh, Ph.D., JD.