

I would like to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2329, an effort led by Crystal Akins to adopt an inclusive Oregon state song contest. As an Indigenous individual who calls Oregon my home, I am saddened that the current song is so fundamentally racist, and is not representative of either the Native nor the Black populations that make up the rich tapestry of our state. These are communities that contribute in so many ways to our overall success, and should be given the opportunity to include their voice in the next iteration of the state song.

Simply modifying the original song lyrics with those written by Amy Donna Shapiro does not allow our BIPOC population to contribute to this important cultural symbol, and ultimately does not achieve the inclusivity referenced in HCR11. Instead, it creates a new version of an already exclusionary song, once again omitting our BIPOC communities' voices. It is time to retire the original song altogether--not just change the lyrics--and offer an opportunity for all Oregonians to submit their ideas for a successor state song.

This is our chance to create an inclusive process, one that shows BIPOC individuals that the state of Oregon is ready to honestly take a look at its past, and work towards a better future for all residents. Therefore, I urge the committee to support HB 2329. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.