

Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. This bill is critical to our future because, we must stop racist behaviors and practices. The more we can embrace our diversity and work together, the better solutions we will get and the more peaceful and resilient our communities as a whole.

In Oregon, with our low numbers of people of color, some people don't see the overt racism that occurs daily, we certainly don't recognize much of the institutionalized racism. We disregard the people of color who helped make Oregon what it is today, despite clear race-based barriers. These people must be recognized. Our pop cultural references still provide mostly negative depictions of people of color. Studies have proven that without active education to counteract those cultural lessons, we naturally develop a negative unconscious bias. We must teach all students the history of racism, the impact on individuals and the community, and resilience of people of color to move forward despite its terrible influence. This will counteract cultural bias and provide a more real narrative.

This kind of education will develop understanding within students and provide a basis for working with all people in the future. This will enhance critical communication, productivity, and team work skills needed for a strong and healthy future workforce.

Thank you for accepting my testimony.