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March 7th 2021

Testimony in Support of SB683

Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Committee on Education

British statesman Winston Churchill wrote, “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” <https://liberalarts.vt.edu/magazine/2017/history-repeating.html#:~:text=Irish%20statesman%20Edmund%20Burke%20is,Churchill%20wrote%2C%20%E2%80%9CThose%20that%20fail> . If this is, indeed, the case, then it becomes axiomatic that if one doesn’t know history, one cannot learn from it and one is likely either to repeat it or perpetuate it.

There surely can be little doubt among Oregonians that the United States, and, indeed, the state of Oregon both have a history of racism. It is difficult to imagine anyone doubting or denying such a statement.

In a time when we are collectively attempting to expunge racism from our society, it is critical for our young people to understand the history of offenses that racism has wrought in Oregon and across the nation; this should be a critical element of both American History and Civics. Even if we were effective enough that we expunged racism from the culture, there is always the danger of its recurrence. The Churchill quote above thus becomes important.

Those of us living in rural Southern Oregon are well aware of the injustices that have been imposed on members of our community by this history of racism. It is our hope that this disease can be expunged as quickly as possible. Once expunged, it is our fervent further wish that racism never return.

The only way we can ensure that our youth learn from history and avoid repeating it, is to guarantee that they will develop an understanding of what racism is, and how damaging it is to those suffering the injustice as well as to our free and democratic society.

Only when students in our schools receive meaningful educational experiences elucidating the history and damage of racism can we expect society to recover from this disease. It is for this reason that we urge the Oregon legislature to pass SB683.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan R.P. Journet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Alan R.P. Journet Ph.D.