

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing in support of SB 683. If the recent uprising for racial justice taught us anything, it's that our country has much work to do and now is the time to act. Let's begin in the classroom by providing all students the opportunity to learn from the past and develop the tools to create a more equitable future.

As a graduate of Oregon's K-12 public schools, I am disappointed in how my education failed to address the historical context and current manifestations of racism in the United States. Graduates of Oregon's K-12 schools enter adulthood woefully unaware of the Black experience in this country.

Imagine a curriculum that gives equal voice to diverse historical experiences. Imagine the power of collective understanding, knowledge, and empathy that would give rise to future generations of advocates and policy makers. In order to truly understand racial inequality today, we need to understand the complete history of American slavery, the Jim Crow era, and the legacies of anti-Black racism in the United States. Acknowledging this uncomfortable history is essential to understanding how structural racism and white supremacy shape our society and day-to-day lives. If we are to make progress on critical issues facing our country such as economic inequality, mass incarceration, and police brutality, our youth must have a baseline understanding of the systemic and institutional forces at play.

SB 683 is a critical step in the ongoing fight for racial equity. I urge you to support this bill to bring anti-racist curriculum to Oregon's schools.

Sincerely,  
Kate Hawkins, Portland