

To: House Committee on Rules

Re: Meeting Date: 2/2/2021 1:00 PM

Testimony for HB 2329 (Directs Secretary of State to create public process to develop state song to replace "Oregon, My Oregon" as state song.)

"Conquered and held by free men, Fairest and the best." These are the third and fourth lines in the Oregon State Song. I wonder what these lines mean? Who was it that was "conquered?" Who wasn't included in the "free men" category? Certainly not women.

I wasn't around in 1927, but I can only imagine that the intent was pretty clear, as it still is for many Oregonians today. It's a message of "you don't belong" - specifically aimed at our Black and brown neighbors. For many of us who are White, we're just starting to understand how Oregon systemically excluded people of color through the mid-1900s. We can't erase history, but we have a choice about how we move forward.

We all want to feel like we belong. And let's move forward in a way that includes all of us - by coming together to rewrite the next stanza of Oregon's history. That's why I support HB 2329 to create an inclusive public process to replace the song.

Sincerely,

Emilee Refvem

Oregonian since 1982