

March 10, 2021
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Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the committee,

My name is Kristen Sartor and I live in Portland. I am writing today to express my strong support for Senate Bill 618, Senate Bill 619 and SJM 4.

There is no question that Black Americans are continuing to suffer from the horrific legacy of slavery. After 250 years (approximately 9 generations) of being enslaved in the United States, Black Americans continued (and continue) to face major obstacles to economic opportunity. There have been (and continue to be) glaring inequities in employment opportunities, education, access to loans/home ownership, healthcare and much more. All of this has existed alongside the mental toll (or worse) that racism takes on a person.

Many Americans do not see, or want to see, the reality of the ongoing suffering that is right in front of their faces. It is easier to believe that all of these horrors are in the past and that everyone has equal opportunity now. One only needs to look at the statistics of who is dealing with poverty, disenfranchisement and many other issues to see that this is simply not the case. We cannot keep on ignoring the damage that our history of enslaving Black Americans continues to do to Black people. We cannot pretend that things are magically on a fair and square playing field now.

Instead of running away from the ugliness of racism and oppression, we must take steps to support and uplift persons that are impacted by it. We must study methods of providing reparations for slavery to Black Oregonians. We must establish a program to actually pay these reparations to Black Oregonians. Additionally, we must urge Congress to develop legislation to start implementing reparations for Black Americans.

It should not be controversial to give descendants of enslaved persons' compensation for their ancestors' labor. These debts must be paid- they are long overdue. This is a step towards creating a better future for us all.

Please do the right thing and support Senate Bill 618, Senate Bill 619 and SJM 4.

Thank you very much for your time and service,
Kristen Sartor