

Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing on behalf of the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network to express our strong support for HB 2377 and to request your support.

HB 2337 declares racism a public health crisis in Oregon. Racism causes harm, trauma, illness, and death to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Oregonians.

Chronic illness is greater for many communities of color. For example, African Americans (38.9%), Pacific Islanders (36.1%), American Indians and Alaska Natives (33.4%), and Latinos (29.1%) are more likely to experience high blood pressure in this state. (Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Preliminary race reporting data file, 2015 – 2016). Addressing these issues of racism improves the health and quality of life for all Oregonians.

HB 2337 was developed by the Oregon Health Equity Task Force which is composed of leaders and community-based organizations representing BIPOC, Tribal, and Immigrant and Refugee communities and includes six initial strategies that are responsive to the specific needs of their communities to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service. I urge you to support HB 2337.

Sincerely,

Megan Kemple

Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network