

Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Billie Travelstead. I am an ASL Interpreter, Social Worker, and Disability Justice advocate in Corvallis. I am writing to request your support for HB2337.

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. HB 2337 acknowledges that Oregon's very founding as a state was rooted in racist ideals, and the damaging impact of these and other racist policies continue to exist within our present-day policies and systems. Further, this bill signals the need for accelerated, intentional actions to heal these injustices and articulates six initial strategies and investments to address health inequities.

In my work, I have seen the impacts of structural inequality almost daily. We can not go on without addressing the sickness of racism that has impacted so many Americans. We can not change the future until we acknowledge and heal the wounds of our past- many of which have been baked into the very systems that are meant to serve the people of this state. We must address this wound if we ever truly want a change to heal this country and live up to the intentions of this great nation.

Regards,

Billie Travelstead