



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

March 23, 2021

To: House Committee on Rules  
Representative Barbara Smith Warner, Chair

Re: [HB 2337](#) – Declaring racism as a public health crisis in Oregon – **Support**

The national, state, and local [Leagues of Women Voters](#) stand together as “an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization’s current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.” Where these societal norms are thwarted—as they are to an egregious extent through systemic racism—the results in the public health arena are outsized harm, trauma, illness, and death. We have ample proof of that in all manner of data and tragic anecdotes emerging from the COVID-19.

HB 2337 articulates the depth and breadth of that legacy by means of the state’s policies, laws, and other systems. And in our view, it lays out a thoughtful and effective blueprint to progress towards rectifying existing public health inequities that have resulted. In brief, it will,

- Expand and support the collection of REALD (Race, Ethnicity, Language, and Disability) data,
- Increase health equity through language access,
- Disrupt policy and laws from maintaining racist outcomes,
- Remove barriers to increase access and quality of care in BIPOC communities,
- Meaningfully invest in community engagement to identify future strategies, and
- Increase community voice in the legislative process.

We understand that there will be a fiscal impact to implement these measures and that the extent of it has not been fully determined, but without substantial, intentional, and effective investment of time, expertise, and money to confront and rectify the results of the past, it will not happen. The time is long overdue to right historic and present wrongs and ensure that all Oregonians have an equal chance at health and the wellbeing it brings.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation and **we urge you to support HB 2337.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca L. Gladstone".

Rebecca Gladstone  
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Walsh".

Bill Walsh  
LWVOR Health Care Portfolio