

Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

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, for example:

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).

African American women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications, and people in rural areas of the U.S. are 64% more likely (Amnesty International, 2010).

Communities of color are more likely to be uninsured (Oregon Health Insurance Survey, 2016).

For these and many other reasons, YES on HB 2337. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Steve Bozzone
Northeast Portland