

April 28, 2021

Greetings Members of Oregon State Government,

I am Heather Coleman-Cox, Media Relations Director for Juneteenth Oregon. I am writing in support of HB 2168 to establish Juneteenth as a legal state holiday.

February 14, 1859 – Oregon joined the Union as the 33rd state founded as “Whites Only” As uncomfortable for it is for me to type this, I assume you feel uncomfortable reading it. Oregon has a long history of institutionalized racism from the hurdling of Blacks and poor Whites to Vanport, Oregon to redlining, preventing banks from providing minorities loans in specific neighborhoods, to name a few unequal differences to people of color. My ancestors migrated here for work; they built the railroads and worked the shipyards establishing this state as an economic leader in timber. My ancestor's contribution to Oregon's Industrial Revolution is amazing.

The social unrest demonstrated by the many peaceful protests across the state last summer surely provided you all direct visibility into the fact Oregon citizens are looking for equality amongst it's citizens of all races, inclusivity and equal protection under the law. Think about it, the history books would not only read Feb 1859 Oregon was established as a Whites Only state but also May 2001 Oregon became amongst the first states to recognize Juneteenth as a paid state holiday. Think about how awesome you would feel being a part of that dynamic history! Your name written in history books demonstrating social righteousness.

It would be FANTASTIC if you all could pass this bill before June 19th this year so the honorable Governor Kate Brown could use our Juneteenth Oregon annual event as one of the platforms to deliver the news via the masses ?? . I would also like to share with you all our live stream program details once finalized so you can get a virtual feel of our annual community event. Oregon is a Trailblazing state from the legendary expedition of Lewis & Clark guided by Sacagawea, to our beloved Trailblazers basketball team! Let Oregon also blaze the trail in Social Justice, Consciousness and Action- Please pass HB 2168.

Cordially,

Heather Coleman-Cox