

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

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Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Girod, Members of the Committee:

As Oregon's 28th Secretary of State I'm proud to join a bipartisan group of legislators in support of HCR 11.

One of my top priorities as Secretary of State is to establish equity at the core of the agency and to be actively anti-racist in the work that we do. As has been well established, the original song lyrics to "Oregon, My Oregon" contain racist, outdated, and exclusionary language and references that do not accurately reflect the whole history of Oregon. These lyrics include references to "Empire builders," and a land "conquered and held by free men, fairest and the best" and "blessed by the blood of martyrs." The song does not account for the experiences of Indigenous people who have lived here since time immemorial.

The Secretary of State Archives Division is responsible for maintaining and providing public access to important pieces of Oregon's history, including through digital and web platforms. As part of the ongoing work to center and advance equity in our agency and state, our office recently made the decision to include more context on the webpage that contains information about the state song, including pointing out the outdated and racist language contained in the current lyrics. I look forward to the day that we can proudly display our official state song among the many treasures at the State Archives.

The lyrics proposed by HCR 11 would do away with exclusionary lyrics that do not represent the whole of this state's people and would, instead, highlight the natural beauty and landscape of Oregon that we all love so much. I believe this bill is a chance to make a small but meaningful change toward a more inclusive Oregon for *everyone* who resides here. I strongly encourage your support for HCR 11.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Fagan".

Shemia Fagan, Secretary of State

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