



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

Ted Wheeler, Mayor
Carmen Rubio, Commissioner
Dan Ryan, Commissioner
Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner
Mingus Mapps, Commissioner

May 4, 2021

Representative Janelle Bynum, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
900 Court St. NE, HR F
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee,

The City of Portland strongly supports SB 398-A to ban the display of a noose and urges the Legislature to pass this bill to address these egregious acts of hate in our region and across the state. SB 398-A opens the door for legal remedies against individuals who commit a hate crime by using the noose with the intent to intimidate or harass another person or group of people.

According to the Oregon Department of Justice, hate crimes and bias incidents in Oregon increased 366 percent in 2020. Across the nation and in Oregon, the surge in hate crimes over recent years has been documented by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) as well as through mainstream and social media. There is a long, violent history associated with the display of a noose and its invocation of lynching. The harm to communities impacted by the display of a noose should not be understated, whether it be in front of the United States Capitol, in a NASCAR garage, at a downtown Portland construction site last May, or near an elementary school in Southwest Portland last October.

As the SPLC describes, the noose “depicts the horrors of racial violence perpetrated against African Americans and others...Nooses show support for the days of segregation and subjugation, epitomizing the essence of discrimination. The noose not only symbolizes racism, but also served as the actual murder implement for the lynching of people because of the color of their skin.”

Six other states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation banning nooses as instruments of hate. Now is the time for Oregon to step up and join them. The City of Portland urges your support of SB 398-A.

Sincerely,

Ted Wheeler
Mayor

Carmen Rubio
Commissioner

Dan Ryan
Commissioner

Jo Ann Hardesty
Commissioner

Mingus Mapps
Commissioner