



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

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

May 6, 2021

Representative Janelle Bynum, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE, HR F
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee,

The City of Portland strongly supports SJM 2, urging Congress to amend the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution to remove the exception clause, and SJR 10 to strike a similar clause from Oregon's Constitution. Oregon must act to end constitutionally permitted slavery, advance our state toward an equitable and anti-racist future, and call on our federal partners to do the same.

The prison system in the United States is deeply rooted in racism and slavery, and the continued abuse of inmates' labor is an incentive to continue the tradition of mass incarceration that has disproportionately targeted the Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. The exception clause continues the racist exploitation of incarcerated individuals.

Oregon's history is just as ingrained in racism and discrimination. The current loophole in Article 1, Section 34 of Oregon's Constitution stands in blatant contrast to the proclaimed values of our state. Every Oregonian deserves to be treated with respect, and to be properly and fairly compensated for their labor, and it is our role as public servants to ensure every one of our residents receives fair and equal treatment under the law. We must continue taking steps to move Oregon to an anti-racist future by undoing systems of oppression and exploitation.

The City of Portland urges the Legislature to send a strong message to Congress and a constitutional amendment to Oregon voters by supporting of SJM 2 and SJR 10. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ted Wheeler
Mayor

Carmen Rubio
Commissioner

Dan Ryan
Commissioner

Jo Ann Hardesty
Commissioner

Mingus Mapps
Commissioner