

I am writing today in support of SJR 10. This proposed amendment would remove the antiquated language of slavery from the Oregon Constitution (Article 1, Section 34) that reads, "There shall be neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude in the State, otherwise than as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." This exception clause allows for the constitutional classification of incarcerated individuals as slaves, denying dignity and humanity while perpetuating historic structural racism.

SJR 10, as introduced, would remove this exception clause from the Oregon Constitution and finally do away with constitutionally permitted slavery in our state. This change in language is an essential step towards reducing structural racism in Oregon.

It is imperative that Oregon take this step toward a more just and equitable future in which everyone has the rights, resources, and recognition needed to thrive. I urge this Committee to vote yes on SJR 10, as introduced, to ensure that slavery is truly a thing of the past.