

Theron D. Hall
SID 14195391
2605 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310

February 23, 2021

Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
900 Court Street NE, Room 331
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SJR 10 Testimony

Dear Legislators,

My name is Theron Hall and I have been incarcerated since I was 18 years old, I am now 36 years old. I am serving life without the possibility of parole. Currently I am the Vice President of Uhuru SaSa, an African American Cultural Club that operates inside of the Oregon State Penitentiary.

Uhuru SaSa was established in 1968. Since then, it has been our mission to develop our members culturally, vocationally, educationally, and assure that our members become productive asset to their communities. We intend to develop our members into leaders that will be of service within the communities to which they will return. We encourage our members to understand politics, economics, and social consequences. We try to remind our people of the pride and dignity that comes with being a member of the African American community, the history of Africa, African- American people, and their contributions to the world while simultaneously pushing them towards education so they will be able to guide their own destinies.

As an African American I have experience racism in one form or another throughout my life. My testimony today is not to focus on the injustices of the past. My focus today is to hopefully inspire you on this committee to utilize your power to effect change in a way that our elected officials have been failing constituents not only in Oregon, but throughout our Nation.

SJR 10 is not about any one political party, it is about the moral fabric used to stitch and weave the different cultures that make us such a great nation. During the peak of the protests that were occurring in Portland I often heard complaints that Black people need to let go of the past. It is often pointed out that we have progressed beyond the dehumanizing days of slavery; however, what is never pointed out is the fact that until this day, in 2021, we still allow the practice of slavery to exist. It is impossible to let go of something that stares you right in the face. Though the protests were about police brutality on the surface, the core of the protests were about fundamental human rights. The right to be valued as a human being.

It Is no secret that African American's are disproportionately arrested and imprisoned because Black life has not been valued, historically, in America. If we know this to be true, which others will testify to, then how can we not remove the language in Article 34 of the Oregon Constitution and claim not to be perpetuating systemic racism?

I will close my testimony with some moral food for thought. SJR 10 is about human rights. It is about formally abolishing slavery in Oregon. The Bill leaves no room for interpretation. As humans we are either for or against slavery. I urge everyone on this committee to vote against slavery and for human rights.

Respectfully,

/s/

Theron D. Hall