



Testimony submitted
Provided by Yasmin Ibarra
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June 18th, 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and Members of the House Committee on Rules,

My name is Yasmin Ibarra and I am the Political Organizer for SEIU Local 49. We represent about 15,000 workers in Oregon and southwest Washington. These workers are of many ethnicities, countries of origin, religion, and gender identities; all united by pride in their work throughout our State.

Today I am submitting testimony in support of SJR 10, which will remove key wording in the state constitution that permits slavery and involuntary servitude for the incarcerated.

SEIU members live and work in communities throughout the state and come from diverse backgrounds. Over 30% of our members are people of color or identify as non-white. SEIU, like many other labor unions, is committed to being an anti-racist organization. Our members believe in and fight for our vision for a just society: where all workers are valued and all people respected, no matter where we are from, the color of our skin, or the language we speak; where all families and communities can thrive; and where we leave a more just and equitable world for generations to come.

Removing slavery and involuntary servitude from our state constitution is a crucial step towards addressing the challenges facing those who are in custody and who are working for pennies. Continuing to deny Black, Indigenous and other communities of color their dignity, humanity, and their rights as workers does not move our state towards a more equitable and anti-racist future. This language only serves to further divide Oregonians and allows the state to continue to profit off their labor; thus continuing the foul practice of slavery to this day.

We believe it is imperative that Oregon take this proactive step to demand a more just and equitable future, where every Oregonian is treated with respect, dignity, and as equals under the law; and where workers will be properly and fairly compensated for their labor.

SEIU Local 49 urges this committee to vote Yes on SJR 10 to remove the slavery exception from the Oregon Constitution because we know that until Black communities and other communities of color can thrive, none of our communities can truly thrive.

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