

Written Testimony for Oregon SJR10 A

Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee.

I am, Max Parthas. Co-director for state operations on behalf of the Abolish Slavery National Network. I would like to begin by applauding the progressive efforts by the great state of Oregon in decriminalizing most drugs while other states still argue over legalizing marijuana.

I feel it necessary to point out the irony of where we find ourselves here today.

Many hard drugs have been decriminalized and yet literal chattel SLAVERY is still legal in your state constitution as well as in the federal constitution.

Section 34 of the Oregon state constitution states.

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.

I would like to state for the record that there is no logical justification for turning a human being into property as a punishment for crime, or, for any other reason.

These exception clauses were enacted in 1865 federally and by two dozen plus states during the 19th century in order to allow convict leasing as a replacement for slavery. We are no longer in 1865. Nor are we in 1965. This is the year 2021 and it is long past time that these loopholes for legalized slavery were removed from our nations constitutions.

As a representative for the Abolish Slavery National Network, and as an American citizen who wants nothing more than to see these dehumanizing and destructive relics of chattel slavery removed, I stand in full support of SJR10 A. The Proposed amendment to the Oregon Constitution which will prohibit slavery and involuntary servitude in all circumstances.

I would like to take a moment to impress upon you the national scale of this argument to end constitutional slavery.

As of today, 4 states have abolished slavery without exception.

Rhode Island, Utah, Colorado, and Nebraska.

12 US states have legislation to remove pro slavery language in 2021 and 2022.

- 1 Alabama
- 2 Louisiana
- 3 California
- 4 Ohio
- 5 Tennessee
- 6 Vermont
- 7 New Jersey
- 8 Texas
- 9 New York
- 10 Minnesota
- 11 Florida
- 12 Oregon

13 additional states, plus the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico are organizing as we speak to do the same by 2022. These include GA/IN/KY/MS/MO/SC/NC/CT/ME/MD/MA/PA/KS

On June 15th, California's ACA3 passed Unanimously through the State Assembly.

On June 16th Ohio heard testimony for their abolition bill.

A federal joint resolution is being submitted on June 17th sponsored by Senator Merkley of Oregon and Congresswoman Nikima Williams.

These mechanisms for race and class based re enslavement put into place by actual enslavers from the 19th century must be removed and it must be done by us in this generation without fail. With God's Grace and Oregon's key participation, it will be done. The trees born of these poisonous seeds must be uprooted.

To quote abolitionist Ernestine Rose

"If you allow one single germ, one single seed of slavery to remain in the soil of America... that germ will spring up, that noxious weed will thrive, and again stifle the growth, wither the leaves, blast the flowers and poison the fair fruits of freedom."

I thank our esteemed committee, the Oregon OASIS organization, and the citizens of this state who will end slavery. With that, I yield.