

My name is Surya Lee, and I am a resident of Salem, Oregon. I moved to Oregon three years ago and fell in love with the state almost instantly. However, there is also a history of systemic racism and ethnic cleansing that we have yet to grapple with. Oregon made a huge step forward by voting to decriminalize drugs this past November, but there is still work to do. In 2021, we still have Oregonians who are constitutionally classified as slaves, both upholding white supremacy and denying thousands their basic human dignity. This injustice has gone on for far too long, and SJR 10 is a chance to end it.

We have been taught that we live in a post-racial society, in which everyone has the right to bodily autonomy and control over their future, but this is not the case by any means. Sometimes it feels overwhelming, like the enormity of a problem is too great to see a clear path forward. This is not one of those moments, our path as Oregonians is crystal clear. It takes only a single phrase to change thousands of lives, anything less is deplorable. SJR 10 is a small action that makes a big difference. It is humanizing for incarcerated people, and it lets Oregon be an example for the rest of the country. As an Oregon resident, I want to see our state take a stand for human dignity and racial justice by eliminating the slavery exception clause in our constitution.