



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 102-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 2, 2022

To: [House Committee on Health](#)
[Representative Andrea Salinas](#), Chair

Re: [HB 4052](#) – Relating to Health Equity – **SUPPORT**

The national, state, and local [Leagues of Women Voters](#) stand together as “an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization’s current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.” Where these societal norms are thwarted—as they are to an egregious extent through systemic racism—the results in the public health arena are outsized rates of harm, trauma, illness, and death for individuals and communities of color. We also base action in the health care arena on the [position](#) developed by the national League decades ago after extensive study of the health care system: “The US health care system should provide a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost to *all* US residents Health care policy goals should include the *equitable distribution* of services and delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level. [italics supplied]” [HR 6 Enrolled \(2021\)](#), , puts Oregon on record acknowledging that racism is a public health crisis. The 2022 Session is the appropriate time to lay the groundwork for effective action to correct that tragic and unacceptable reality.

We have reviewed HB 4052 and found it to articulate a thoughtful and thorough blueprint emerging from the Oregon Health Authority’s foundational and community-driven 2020-2024 State Health Improvement Plan known as Healthier Together Oregon. The goal is health equity throughout the state. To that end, the bill will launch and facilitate this work by:

- Expanding and supporting the collection of essential data,
- Increasing health equity through language access,
- Disrupting policy and laws from maintaining racist outcomes,
- Removing barriers to increase access and quality of care in BIPOC communities,
- Investing in community engagement to identify future strategies, and
- Increasing community voice in the legislative process.

We understand that there will be a fiscal impact of up to \$2 million to implement these measures, but without substantial, intentional, and effective investment of time, expertise, and money to confront and rectify the results of the past, progress will stall. The time is long overdue to right historic and present wrongs and ensure that all Oregonians have an equal chance at health and the wellbeing it brings.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation and **we urge you to support HB 4052.**

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

Shirley Weathers, Ph.D.
LWVOR Racial Equity