



## Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

February 2, 2022

Dear Chair Prusak, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 4052, which will take action on initial strategies to address the harm, trauma, illness, and death racism causes for public health. My name is Alberto Gallegos, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of SEIU Oregon, which includes both SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49. Together, SEIU 503 and 49 represent over 85,000 workers in Oregon, including homecare workers, nursing home workers, private nonprofit workers, in-home childcare providers, state and local government workers, private sector janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing workers, and hospital workers. SEIU believes in and fights for our vision for a just society.

HB 4052 was developed by the Oregon Health Equity Task Force, which includes leaders and community-based organizations representing BIPOC, Tribal, and Immigrant and Refugee communities. This bill follows on HR 6, which was adopted by the House during the 2021 session and declared racism a public health crisis. Like HR 6, HB 4052 acknowledges the racism inherent in Oregon's founding as a state and the damaging impact of the racist policies that continue to exist within our present day policies and systems. Further, this bill takes steps toward accelerated, intentional action to heal these injustices.

Oregon has deep roots of racism, including: the Land Donation Act of 1850 that made it legal to steal land from Native American Tribes; the 1887 murder of Chinese miners; Black exclusionary laws with lashing as punishment; Japanese internment camps during WWII; segregation in education; and real estate redlining that drove down values and reduced home ownership in the black communities. This history has left a legacy of trauma from one generation to the next, cumulatively impacting Oregon Tribes and BIPOC communities and creating racial disparities in social, health, economic, legal, and academic outcomes.

Racism is pervasive and integrated into every institution and system connected with social determinants of health. It ultimately impacts the ability of Oregonians to be healthy and live well to their fullest potential. Racism has created an untenable situation, and immediate action is needed to mitigate further harm and violence against BIPOC Oregonians and Tribes.

Specifically, HB 4052 will remove barriers to increase access and quality of care in BIPOC communities, meaningfully invest in community engagement to identify future strategies, and develop recommendations to fund culturally specific programs.

Racism did not happen overnight nor with one single action. Therefore, dismantling systemic racism will take many years, community action, and multiple legislative efforts, including this bill. SEIU Oregon urges you to vote yes on HB 4052.

Sincerely,

Alberto Gallegos  
SEIU Oregon State Council