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Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on General Government
Oregon State Capitol
900 State St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on General Government:

As a lifelong Oregonian, it has been for me both a privilege and a delight to enjoy the many unique gifts that Oregon has to offer. One of the things that I most love about this state's government is its commitment to treats its constituents fairly and with equity; we are a state that is always striving to do better, and right the wrongs of the past.

It's no secret that Oregon has a deeply racist history. In both 1844 and 1849, Black exclusionary acts were passed by the territory's government—the progenitor of the state body that I'm addressing today. In 1859, our state constitution prevented Black people from owning property here; and, even though this language no longer exists in today's constitution, its echoes still linger. In the city of Portland, according to census numbers, roughly 50% of the homeless population is made up of people of color. In the wider population, however, that number is closer to 25%. Equity issues intersect with every issue that this state is facing, and funding measures to properly address these problems can only help to solve them in the long run.

That's why I'm asking that you appropriately fund the work of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office. True equity requires investment. The breadth and depth of the issues that OACO addresses can't be solved with a band-aid approach. The four volunteer advisory boards that OACO supports deal with different areas and shouldn't be treated as a monolith. With the current funding and staffing level, OACO is hamstrung, and the commissions are set up to fail.



I ask that you consider the very real needs of the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs, the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and the Oregon Commission for Women. If you truly support their missions, you'll also choose to support the organization that helps to carry them out: OACO.

Sincerely,

Rita Tiwari