

Written testimony presented to the Oregon Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency
Management, Federal and World Affairs

in FAVOR of SB 776

February 28, 2023

Chair Manning, and Members of the Committee,

As a life-long Oregonian, I ask you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 776.

I am white and have benefitted tremendously from racism. My parents benefited from it before me. I have benefited financially, medically, educationally, and emotionally. I do not have to seek this benefit out, and do not even need to be aware of the ways in which I benefit.

Senate Bill 776 represents a long overdue, but very important step in our process of acknowledging the deep and devastating damage our culture of inequity has caused, and in taking a first step towards addressing that harm. I support reparations and believe it is our duty to pursue all avenues of achieving it.

We cannot claim ignorance of the deep and shameful past of Oregon's lawmakers, and the harmful legacy that we have inherited from them. Nor can we claim ignorance of the harm that is being caused today through current and long-standing injustices and the generations of wealth building that has been denied to Oregonians through discriminatory practices and policies, particularly BIPoC households. But we can say that this stops here. And now.

You can choose to continue the practice of inequity in our state by allowing the compounding impact of all inequities, past and current, to impact the lives of BIPoC people, or you can take the opportunity before you and make Oregon a stronger, safer place for all, and a state we can be proud of and pass Senate Bill 776.

Thank you considering my testimony.

Dr. Lily Copenagle

Portland, OR