

March 1, 2023

TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare  
FROM: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda  
RE: Support for HB 2918 and 2925, Racism is a Public Health Crisis

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Goodwin, Vice-Chair Nelson, and Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2918 and HB 2925. My name is Marsh M Santoro and I live in Fairview, Oregon.

I'm writing to support HB 2918 and HB 2925: Racism is a Public Health Crisis. HB 2918 and HB 2925 are 2023 Children's Agenda priority concepts. Progress was made when the Oregon Legislature passed HB 4052 in 2022, but without the necessary funds, this bill cannot be fully implemented. We must take action to fully identify investments and strategies to meaningfully address physical and mental health inequities among Oregon's Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and sovereign Tribal Nations.

I have 40 plus years as a Professional Child Care Provider and am a Child advocate still. And every child deserves preventive health care regardless of race, creed or color, what is wrong with us if we are not making sure that every one of our children are healthy and happy so as to have as many opportunities as possible to thrive and grow into prosperous adults.

Funding key strategies to address racism as a public health crisis will provide the ~269,000 children of color living in Oregon the preventative care they deserve, ensuring an equitable state where every child thrives. We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge you to support HB 2918 and HB 2925.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Marsh Santoro