

Submitter: Sheila Somers

On Behalf Of: Black Oregonians

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Measure: SB776

Please support SB776 Relating to a task force on reparations for Oregonians of African-American descent. I am a white Oregonian and psychotherapist who is troubled by our state's history and institutional racism that continues to negatively impact Black Oregonians in far reaching ways. Black Oregonians are experiencing daily discrimination, wage inequalities, higher rates of unemployment, housing insecurity and are more likely to experience police violence and incarceration due to the color of their skin.

As a state, we espouse celebrating equity and diversity, but we, as a collective, have never reckoned with the past nor sought in any meaningful way to repair the harms caused. To heal from this legacy means to take responsibility for our past actions and our ongoing participation in, and benefit from, these systems of oppression.

True change is not going to come from talking about change, it's going to come from repairing harm. This bill is one vital step in moving in the direction of addressing a deep issue within our state and country. This act will be a movement towards efforts to acknowledge and heal generations of trauma.

I encourage you to be the leaders who act on this vital step of repair and healing. Please act right here and right now to implement reparations for Black Oregonians.

Thank you,

Sheila Somers