

Submitter: Kaliko Castille

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB3431

Dear Chair Bynum and the Honorable Members of the House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business,

My name is Kaliko Castille. I'm a lifelong resident of Milwaukie, OR and serve as President of a national organization called Minority Cannabis Business Association.

I am writing to ask you to support the Oregon Economic Equity Investment Act, or HB 3431 because it is long past time for Oregon to right the systemic wrongs that have been perpetrated against communities of color since our state's founding.

As a person of color, community member and advocate, Economic Justice and equity are important to me and I believe that HB 3431 can be a tremendous vehicle for generation change in the communities most impacted by systemic racism.

The Economic Equity Investment Program (EEIP), created in 2022, directed Business Oregon to provide one-time funding to community-based organizations with solutions that build generational wealth for communities experiencing multiple economic risk factors. HB 3431 asks the legislature to make ongoing, holistic investments with cannabis taxes to achieve positive change in the intersecting inequities of poverty and substance abuse.

Black people were arrested at 4 times the rate of their White counterparts in Oregon for cannabis possession despite usage being equal across races. The criminal justice system

stripped wealth from Black families with documented targeting of Black communities like draconian War on Drugs laws. Oregon faces an imperative to address economic justice with the legalization of cannabis. Closing the wealth gap is a root cause solution to pressing concerns facing Oregon. The communities at the bottom of the wealth gap are the same communities experiencing the highest substance abuse mortality rates.

Too often in Oregon, we see what amounts to performative equity --- the idea that we will pay lip service to system inequality but not actually do anything substantive to change the circumstances for those who find themselves with the short end of the stick. That is why it is so important to me and my community that you support HB 3431 --- this will be a real down payment on the future of communities of color in Oregon and an opportunity for our great state to live up to its full promise.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

-Kaliko Castille