



**Oregon Commission on Black Affairs**

**Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon**

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

For the record, my name is Mitchel Asemota; I am a Commissioner on the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA).

The OCBA is a catalyst that empowers partnerships between the state government and our community in rural and urban areas to ensure success for all African American and Black Oregonians by addressing longstanding and emerging issues at the policy level.

I am writing this testimony in support of House Bill 3563, which establishes the Oregon Youth Works Advisory Board within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC).

HB 3563 is essential to improving the Oregon Youth Corps, Oregon Conservation Corps Program, and Oregon Youth Employment Program. As a youth advocate, this bill is crucial for providing adequate support and oversight for these critical programs.

A lack of resources for young people can significantly impact their future, including their academic success, job prospects, and mental health. In this testimony we will explore the issue of a lack of resources for young people in Oregon, provide detailed statistics, and offer potential solutions.

According to a report by the Oregon Department of Education, only 76% of Oregon high school students graduated on time in 2020. This is lower than the national average of 85%, indicating that many young people in Oregon are not receiving the education they need to succeed in the future. The report also found significant disparities in graduation rates between different racial and ethnic groups, highlighting the need for more resources to support equity in education.

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the unemployment rate for youth aged 16 to 24 was 15.5% in 2020, significantly higher than the overall unemployment rate of 7.3%. This indicates that many young people in Oregon are struggling to find employment and may not have access to the resources they need to develop the skills required for successful job placement.

**Oregon Commission on Black Affairs**

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The lack of resources for young people in Oregon is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive solution.

The Oregon Youth Corps, Oregon Conservation Corps Program, and Oregon Youth Employment Program are critical programs that provide young people with valuable work experience and skill development. These programs help prepare young people for the workforce while providing them with opportunities to give back to their communities. However, without adequate support and oversight, these programs may not be able to reach their full potential.

The Oregon Youth Works Advisory Board can provide advice and oversight for these programs, and the board can ensure that they are meeting the needs of young people and providing them with the support and resources necessary for success. The board can also help ensure these programs operate efficiently and effectively. By providing oversight, the board can help identify areas where these programs may be experiencing challenges and work with program administrators to develop solutions. The board can also help to ensure that these programs meet the communities' needs by providing feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Finally, the Oregon Youth Works Advisory Board can help to ensure that these programs are adequately funded. Without sufficient funding, these programs may not be able to provide young people with the resources and support they need to succeed. The board can work with legislators and other stakeholders to ensure these programs receive the funding needed to operate effectively.

House Bill 3563 is essential to improving the Oregon Youth Corps, Oregon Conservation Corps Program, and Oregon Youth Employment Program. By establishing the Oregon Youth Works Advisory Board, we can ensure that these programs provide young people with the support and resources necessary for success.

We urge you to support this bill and take action to improve these essential programs.

Sincerely,




Mitchel Asemota

Commissioner, Oregon Commission on Black Affairs



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