



February 8, 2024

Black American Chamber  
121 SW Salmon St. Floor 10  
Portland, OR 97204

**Testimony of Evann Goss-Lemelle, Executive Director of the Black American Chamber of Commerce**

**In Support of HB 4041**

**House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business**

**February 8, 2024**

Chair Bynum and the Honorable Members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business. Thank you for allowing me to submit today this testimony in support of House Bill 4041.

As an agent of empowerment for the black business community, I believe economic justice and equity are essential for the future prosperity of our state. Additionally, we are beginning to see the resources allocated after the events of George Floyd, to disadvantaged communities in an attempt to return the hope offered by economic opportunity that was stripped from them, being eroded away and the normalcy that kept them from economic freedom beginning to show itself once more.

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 across Oregon. The results are now in and the EEIP has become a proven model to advance equitable economic development in every corner of our state.

That is why it is so important to The Black American Chamber of Commerce and the Black Community as a whole that you support House Bill 4041. Oregon is now approaching a critical juncture where we decide if we show the rest of the United States that we believe in equity, opportunity and ensuring that all of those who reside here are seen, heard and cared for, or we just show them that we consider our diversity box “checked”.

Thank you,

*Evann Goss-Lemelle*

Evann Goss-Lemelle

Executive Director, Black American Chamber of Commerce