

Submitter: Grant Johnson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2995

I submit my opposition to the creation of any group or task force to study the possibility of any type of payment to present day Oregon citizens of color.

In the last few years I've paid close attention to the opinions on both sides of this controversy, and I'm hoping that the clarity of what the Oregon legislature should be giving full scope of attention to, will be for the benefit of all citizens, rather than the few that are not easily identified.

-As a state and a nation, we are grappling with who exactly would be on the receiving end of any type of reparation. This is simply because of the factors of who actually fits within a category of African American, and whether they themselves have experienced the negative effects of slavery. It is well known that black people actually participated in owning human slaves themselves. It is also well known that there have been people of Caucasian descents that also have been enslaved.

-Having the amount of access to public debate on this issue, one must only tune in to hear how many black people have spoken out on this subject. I have heard, as well as personally known many black people who would first testify that they are not African Americans....they in fact are pure American through and through. They also speak about the many opportunities that the United States has offered their families. Their stories speak of lives that are grateful for this country and what they have had as much access to as anyone else. Many I've heard are embarrassed by this movement, as if to say that they are not afforded the same opportunities as other citizens, and that we should look upon them as the poor, down and out people who need a hand out.

-My personal experience of serving this country as an active duty Air Force member for a full 20+ year career, and another full career serving as a civil servant for the Department of Defense, tells quite a different story. Many friends, neighbors, co workers, supervisors, commanders, and family members as well, are of black heritage. I'm proud to have served, sacrificed, lived with, and worshiped with in various churches. I have never had association with one black person who supports the need for our current day taxes to be funneled to them. They in fact have raised the obvious questions of who qualifies, what if you are of mixed race, and most obvious is how exactly does this actually help anyone in present day?

I will conclude by saying that humanity itself has some rugged history. Slavery is not one to be proud of, especially where that humans were abused or harmed in any

way. I join with the black people of current times who are calling for Oregon to focus on the most egregious harm being done, that being the current outcomes of public education. How can an Oregonian be happy with being rated near the bottom of educational outcomes in these 50 states? The graduation rate is falling, and for those who do graduate, it is beyond any reason why that basic reading and math skills have plummeted.

I call for this legislature to focus on areas that affect our society as a whole. We should be outraged that this beautiful home state of mine, would fall to this level. I submit my request to filter the energies in to areas that benefit all, for the current time....and for our future.