



The Soul Restoration Center  
14 NE Killingsworth  
Portland, OR 97211  
[www.TheSoulRestorationCenter.com](http://www.TheSoulRestorationCenter.com)

DATE: February 24, 2025  
RE: Support for HB #2995

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis and members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans:

I am writing to express my unqualified support for House Bill 2995, which proposes the establishment of a state Task Force on reparations. This initiative is an important step toward acknowledging and addressing the systemic injustices endured by Black Oregonians since the founding of this state, which constitutionally once banned Black people from living in Oregon.

I am a Pulitzer Prize nominated, nationally award-winning, former columnist for The Oregonian newspaper, where I worked for 10 years. I often wrote columns, poetry, and created community-based projects that highlighted the experiences of Black people in Oregon. I wrote songs about the town of Maxville, which was created in 1923 in eastern Oregon, and recruited Black Southerners to cut down trees, until the Great Depression hit. I also wrote about how the state's second largest town, Vanport, was flooded, killing former WWII workers and leaving thousands of people, a significant number of which were Black, homeless, penniless and hopeless. And this happened during a time in our state when race relations between Blacks and whites was at one of its lowest points.

I also wrote the libretto for the state's first jazz opera about Portland's reputation as a hub for Black music after WWII. I've also written about the historical and financial losses Black people experienced due to years of urban renewal efforts that intentionally targeted Portland's Black community. What's more, I opened a Black community center, named The Soul Restoration Center, located in Northeast Portland, specifically because I wanted to offer my beleaguered Black community a place of healing, empowerment and hope. Reparations would acknowledge the state's active participation in the racial, financial, and psychological harm that has been intentionally targeted toward Black people living in the state of Oregon.

I strongly encourage you to support HB 2995, and provide your full support of its passage.

Sincerely,

  
A Visionary HeARTivist

2023 Steve Lowenstein Trust Award  
2021 Gladys McCoy Lifetime Achievement Award, Multnomah County  
2021 Liberty & Hope Award, League of Minority Voters  
2019 Spirit of Portland Award