

Submitter: Anthony DeLorenzo

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2995

Hello,

I am writing to express my support of HB 2995, as it is imperative that we find ways to support the African American community of Oregon after centuries of anti-Black local, state, and federal policy.

I have lived in Oregon for over ten years in rural and urban areas. Originally I came here to work for an organization called Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest, a non-profit that sends Americorps members to various social service agencies throughout the state. While the specific cities have varied over the years they have included places like Portland, Gresham, Hillsboro, Hood River, Bend, and Woodburn. Over the years I came into contact with dozens of non-profits across the state and have learned that while many offer social services to at-risk communities, most are at best briefly alleviating symptoms rather than addressing problems at their core, and very few of them are supporting the Black community specifically.

In many cases these non profits are even making things worse. As one example, even Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest's former executive director, said that the process of sending in our Americorps members to serve in communities they were not a part of inherently pushes the long term residents out, and she named the historically Black Albina neighborhood in Northeast Portland as an example of that. So by executive leadership's own admission, they knowingly creating housing instability in neighborhoods with a high population of African Americans, but justified this because they were then providing volunteers to administer things like housing services. Essentially they described creating a relationship where they were knowingly destroying communities and then forcing them to depend on us for basic survival. This example from just one non-profit is something that I saw repeatedly through the state with just about every other organization we sent volunteers to.

This is all to say that the non-profit system, where one might expect people would be invested in supporting African-Americans in Oregon, has failed to do that, and in many cases they are actually making it worse. We can not rely on it to solve the economic and social problems encountered here.

I anticipate some people who are not African-American will challenge the fairness of HB 2995. I am a white person, and understand that I will not be benefiting from this, at least not directly. But we all suffer when we have neighbors without financial

resources, as it results in people making more decisions out of desperation, resulting in higher crime rates and a less safe place for us all to live. So anytime we create more economic stability for any group of people in the state of Oregon, we all benefit from that as it creates a healthier place to live overall.

Creating a process of giving of reparations to Oregonians with African American descent would be a more effective and longer term solution than using the non-profit system to respond to people in crisis. Giving reparations is necessary and not being pursued on a large enough scale. It is something we all, regardless of our race, will benefit from. Please vote in favor of HB 2995