



Q Center  
4115 North Mississippi Avenue  
Portland, OR 97217

Dear Chair Tran, Co-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and Members of the Committee:

The board of the Q Center is in strong support of HB 2995 to establish a Task Force on Reparations for Black/African-American Oregonians. The Q Center, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, has been located on N Mississippi Avenue since 2009. The rental building that Q Center has occupied is in a neighborhood deeply impacted by racist policies.

As a queer community organization, we understand deeply how systemic discrimination can create intergenerational harm and trauma. The documented history of anti-Black racism in Oregon demonstrates an urgent need to study pathways for repair and justice. From our state's earliest days, Black Oregonians faced deliberate, systemic exclusion and violence that has created lasting disparities:

- Oregon's 1844 exclusion law mandated that Black people attempting to settle in Oregon would be publicly whipped every six months until they departed
- The 1857 state constitution banned Black people from legally residing in Oregon, owning property, making contracts, voting, or using the legal system
- The federal Donation Land Act of 1850 explicitly limited land grants to white settlers, embedding racial wealth disparities into the foundation of property ownership in our state
- By the 1920s, Oregon had the largest KKK chapter west of the Mississippi River, creating an environment of terror and intimidation
- Racially restrictive covenants, redlining, and real estate discrimination confined Black Portlanders to specific neighborhoods well into the 20th century

The impacts of these policies continue today. While Black Oregonians managed to build vibrant communities despite incredible odds, systemic barriers prevented the accumulation of generational wealth and economic security. When Black workers were recruited to Oregon's shipyards during WWII, discriminatory union policies relegated them to the lowest-paid positions. After the Vanport flood displaced thousands of Black residents in 1948, they were deliberately confined to the Albina district through racist housing policies.

One of the most glaring examples of ongoing present harm is the disproportionately negative impact of policing on Black families and communities:



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- Ongoing overrepresentation of Black people in Oregon in traffic stops by Oregon State Police and other departments, as well as in the justice system demonstrate that the impacts of racism continue in the present, with Black Oregonians being arrested 2.3x more often and incarcerated over 5x more often than white people
- While Black Oregonians are disproportionately represented in negative interactions in the justice system, Black Oregonians have shared that they do not have equitable, culturally-responsive access to supports like victim services

As a 2SLGBTQIA+ organization, we know that justice requires both acknowledging past harms and taking concrete steps toward repair. The intersections between racial justice and 2SLGBTQIA+ liberation are inseparable – many in our community are Black 2SLGBTQIA+ Oregonians who have faced compounded discrimination. We cannot achieve true equality while leaving any community behind.

We urge you to pass HB 2995 and begin this vital process of studying how Oregon can address its legacy of anti-Black racism through concrete action. The time for reparations is now.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Q Center

Cited:

- [“Blacks in Oregon” | Oregon Encyclopedia](#)
- [2024 Criminal Justice Commission STOP Report](#)
- [Oregon Criminal Justice Data Snapshot \(2023\)](#)