

Submitter: Kaylee Babb

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2995

My name is Kaylee Babb, and I am a white Portlander, born and raised in Oregon.

The first Black exclusion law was passed in Oregon in 1844, prohibiting slavery and any Black person from residing in the territory, seeking harsh physical punishments to those who did. This was the first of three laws excluding Black Americans from settling in Oregon, and is a large factor in the demographic makeup of the state today, where Black Oregonians are 2% of the population. Portland is the 27th largest city by size in the US, and is one of the whitest cities on the list due to these Black exclusion laws.

HB 2995 is an opportunity for Oregon to acknowledge its historic wrongs and work on building a better relationship with its Black communities. The task force on reparations seeks to improve the lives of community members with its findings, centering those who have been marginalized the most in the state. The Black exclusion laws, housing discrimination and redlining, healthcare discrimination, job discrimination and racism have all worked together to keep Black Oregonians without the stability that white Oregonians have had since the violent settlement of the Indigenous land we now call Oregon. This bill begins the process for fairer legislation, and material improvement in the lives of our Black community members.

In order to support our communities, allow them to thrive, I implore you to vote yes on HB 2995.

Thank you,
Kaylee Babb