

Dear Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development,

We, the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA), are submitting testimony in support of HB 3006, which seeks to increase the representation of Black individuals within Oregon's education workforce. This bill will provide essential funding to establish accessible pathways for aspiring educators and administrators from historically underrepresented communities. It will also offer financial assistance and incentives to schools to recruit, hire, and support diverse educators throughout their careers.

The significance of HB 3006 cannot be overstated. A diverse and representative education workforce directly impacts student outcomes, fosters cultural responsiveness in teaching, and ensures that Black and Brown students see themselves reflected in positions of leadership and influence. This bill is a crucial step in dismantling systemic barriers that have long prevented communities of color from gaining equitable access to careers in education.

Oregon has a deep and complex history of exclusionary policies that have marginalized Black residents, impacting every facet of life—from housing and employment to education. Addressing these inequities requires more than acknowledgment; it demands action. HB 3006 represents a meaningful commitment to not only diversifying the workforce but also empowering the next generation of students by providing them with educators who understand their lived experiences and challenges.

This bill will:

- **Promote Diversity** – Establishing targeted funding and incentives will increase the number of educators from Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, ensuring a more inclusive and representative workforce.
- **Support Equitable Opportunities** – By reducing financial barriers through scholarships and funding initiatives, this bill will create an accessible pathway for individuals from Black individuals to enter and succeed in educational careers.
- **Enhance Student Success** – Studies have shown that students perform better academically and socially when taught by educators who share their cultural backgrounds and experiences.
- **Foster Systemic Change** – Schools that prioritize diverse hiring practices create more inclusive environments, benefiting all students and improving long-term educational outcomes for historically underserved communities.

The need for equity-driven policies in education is long overdue. We must ensure that Black and Brown students have access to educators who reflect their identities and advocate for their success. The passage of HB 3006 is a direct investment in Oregon's future, strengthening not only our schools but our communities as a whole.

We fully support HB 3006, which recognizes the urgent need to diversify Oregon's education workforce and provides tangible solutions to address long-standing disparities.

Sincerely,

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs

