

Good afternoon members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is KC Lewis, I am a resident of Oregon and an attorney. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 618, and in support of the concept of reparations for black Oregonians. I chose to become a lawyer because I believed in the concept of justice, but in my time working in the legal system I have come to realize that true justice cannot be built on a foundation of injustice. Our legal system, our economy, and our society are built on some of the greatest injustices in history, the genocide of one people and the kidnapping and enslavement of another. Everything that we have, all of our comfort and plenty, has its roots in those sins, and while those sins go unacknowledged we will continue to live as an unjust society. While we cannot undo the calamitous injustices of our past, the very least we can do as human beings is look them in the eye and attempt to reckon with them. This bill, which takes a first step toward paying duly owed restitution to people who never received their day in court for the heinous crimes committed against them, is a good start. Thank you.