



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"
1819 SW 5th Ave., Portland, OR 97201
O 503.302.9725 / F 503.473.8519
Email: oaco.mail@state.or.us
Website: www.oregon.gov/OCBA

Testimony in Support of SB 5501
March 11, 2013

Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair Smith, Sen. Johnson, Sen. Whitsett,
Rep. Gomberg, and Rep. Nathanson,

Addressing disparities in education, employment, economic opportunity and health care access are the underlying issues of much of the advocacy and policy work of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA). Each year the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs works statewide to engage the community in public policy discussions, building relationships and conversations with community and state departments on justice and other key issues of equity and government transparency. Our 2012 Annual Report details a successful year of advocacy and partnership.

In 2013, the OCBA is expanding its partnership with Urban League of Portland to co-sponsor the "Our Voices United" legislative day as well as working much more closely with our brothers and sisters in the other Advocacy Commissions. The Commission on Black Affairs will also be looking for more opportunities to utilize the talents and ideas of bright, capable college interns in helping us gather data and information in support of the formulation of policy initiatives.

While all of the OCBA Commissioners volunteer their time, our work would be much reduced in effectiveness without the coordination and support of the 2 staff of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office. From reporting, to meeting coordination, to building relationships with partners, they support our work. Also, restoring a portion of the Commissioner travel budget to assure we meet face to face and in outlying areas at least annually is important to our success in reaching our statewide mandate and building the working relationship between Commissioners. The modest investment with a work study student will also expand our bandwidth with web and Facebook support for the Commissioners and their community and policy connections.

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs urges the Committee members to fully fund the OAC office.

Sincerely,

Isaac Dixon, Chair

OR Commission on Black Affairs

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