

I would like to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2329, an effort led by Crystal Akins to adopt an inclusive Oregon state song contest. To all the diverse populations that call Oregon their home, having a song celebrating stealing the land from the Indigenous people is not only obscene and fundamentally racist, it's a very poor reflection of what (I hope) Oregon aspires to be: inclusive of the various communities of people of color that comprise citizens of our lovely state. These communities are vital in so many ways to our overall success, it is a discredit and a dishonor not to include their voices and presence in the next state song.

Simply modifying the original song lyrics is not a solution, as it robs our BIPOC population the opportunity to contribute to this important cultural symbol, and ultimately does not achieve the inclusivity referenced in HCR11. Let's not just create a new version of an already exclusionary song. It's time to include our BIPOC communities voices and offer an opportunity for all Oregonians to submit their ideas for a better song to represent the people living here.

This is an important chance to create an inclusive process, one that shows BIPOC individuals that the state of Oregon is ready to honestly take a look at its past, and work towards a better future for all residents. Therefore, I urge the committee to support HB 2329. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.