

Date: March 23, 2021

Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Ashley Schuyler. I am a public health researcher and PhD student at Oregon State University in Corvallis. I am writing to request your support for **HB2337**.

HB 2337 declares racism a public health crisis in Oregon. Racism causes harm, trauma, illness, and death to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Oregonians. HB 2337 acknowledges that Oregon's very founding as a state was rooted in racist ideals, and the damaging impact of these and other racist policies continue to exist within our present-day policies and systems. Further, this bill signals the need for accelerated, intentional actions to heal these injustices and articulates six initial strategies and investments to address health inequities.

Racism in Oregon has left a legacy of trauma from one generation to the next, impacting Oregon Tribes and BIPOC communities through a cumulative effect. Racism is pervasive and is integrated into every institution and system that is connected to the social determinants of health, and ultimately impacts Oregonian's ability to be healthy and well to the fullest potential. Incidents of racism consistently experienced by Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities and Tribes create racial disparities in social, health, economic, legal, and academic outcomes. As public health professionals, we assert that this issue is not about politics. This issue is about people's lives and their health, and the fact that people are dying far earlier than they should, and that we must do a much better job of preventing that. Racism in Oregon and nationwide has created a situation that is untenable and where immediate action must be taken to mitigate further harm and violence against BIPOC Oregonians and Tribes. This effort will look like many similar ones out there. Racism didn't happen overnight and with one action and dismantling systematic racism will take many years, multiple legislative concepts, policies, and community pushes.

HB 2337 was developed by the Oregon Health Equity Task Force which is composed of leaders and community-based organizations representing BIPOC, Tribal, and Immigrant and Refugee communities and includes six initial strategies that are responsive to the specific needs of their communities to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities.

1. Expand and support the collection of REAL-D data
2. Meaningfully invest in community engagement to identify future strategies
3. Health Equity Policy Analyst to disrupt policy from maintaining racist outcomes
4. Increase health equity through language access
5. Increase community voice in the legislative process
6. Remove barriers to increase access and quality of care in BIPOC communities

Thank you for the consideration and for your service. I urge you to support HB 2337.

Sincerely,

Ashley Schuyler, MPH

Oregon State University