

My name is Amy Donna Shapiro. I have lived in Beaverton with my husband, Family Physician Dr. Jeffrey Olenick since 1982. During that 38 years I have worked as a music teacher and choir director and have done what I could to promote social justice, particularly through music. I have taught a lot of children to sing and have sung for a lot of old people. Now, I'm one of the old people, (pause) and I am hoping to leave a lasting positive legacy by changing the words of the Oregon state song.

I have a personal history with our state song, "Oregon, My Oregon": I first discovered the song and its inappropriate lyrics when I was asked to teach it to my children's choir for a state-wide "Children's Day" at the capitol in 1990. That was the one and only time we sang it. I think that, because I had lived for 2 years among the Oglala Lakota Sioux Nation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, I was especially upset by the racist lyrics that glorified the conquest and slaughter of Oregon's indigenous inhabitants. Twenty-five years later, I was invited to sing the song with the Hillsboro Symphony Orchestra and it was then that I began to write the new lyrics we are proposing today.

I have always been an advocate for social change: I worked for women's rights while living in Pine Ridge. I am proud to have been involved in the establishment of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial in Washington Park and I sang at its dedication. And I am the author and composer of one of the official songs of Madison, Wisconsin, where I was born.

I have been working with the Oregon legislature since 2016, reaching out first to Senator Mark Hass, then working with Rep. Tobias Read and, since 2017, with my Rep. Sheri Schouten. A few years ago, Sheri introduced me to tech-savvy Evelyn Kocher and the Facebook page "Change the Oregon State Song" was created. Now I think that maybe we should have called the page "Save the Oregon State Song" because that is what we are truly doing – preserving our historic state song.

The changes we have proposed are small but they are profound. Outdated, misleading and offensive words glorifying oppression and murder are replaced with inspiring words glorifying Oregon's natural beauty – majestic mountains, forests and rivers – as well as our love of freedom.

Oregon's artistic community has welcomed these changes. Dr. Paul Klemme, director of the Willamette Master Chorus in Salem, is looking forward to performing and recording "Oregon, My Oregon" with the new lyrics. And a virtual recording of the song is planned for next month with me singing the new, revised lyrics with the Hillsboro Symphony Orchestra.

Many people in Oregon are surprised to learn that we even have a state song, since it is so rarely sung. I want to sing it. I want you to sing it with me. I want schoolchildren and community choirs to sing it.

I want everyone to be proud to sing it. By making a few updates to the lyrics, we can make that happen and we can make history.

Please pass HCR 11 to save our state song, "Oregon, My Oregon".

Thank You,
Amy Donna Shapiro
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