



**Advocating for Equity and  
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Testimony in support, SJR 10  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Thursday May 6, 2021, 1:00 PM

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs noble and Power, Representatives Dexter, Helm, Kropf, Lewis, Morgan, Wallan, and Wilde,

My name is Mariotta Gary-Smith and I am a member of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (herein OCBA). The OCBA's role is to work toward economic, social, political, and legal equity for Oregon's Black & African American residents. We do this through advocacy, public policy research, leadership development and partnerships.

I'm writing to state my support for the proposed bill, SJR 10 (Relating to the prohibition of slavery). As a Black woman, and a 3rd generation Oregonian, whose family has been involved in civil rights and social justice work, this bill resonates with me on a personal level.

Many of my elder family members were subjected to blatant and persistent racism - long term impacts of chattel slavery that are part of this state's history. Small steps, such as amending this language in the Constitution are important, in terms of context and respect.

To some, this may present as a small and seemingly insignificant gesture. I offer that this action builds on the foundation of acknowledgement, accountability and alliance to make Oregon better than its past.

There is value in shifting language & having the Constitution reflect our values. In that light, I urge you to vote yes on SJR 10.

Sincerely,

Mariotta Gary-Smith, OCBA Vice-Chair

