

July 30, 2020

Governor Kate Brown
900 Court Street
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Brown,

I am a student on the southern Oregon coast. Not only am I a student, but I am also a community member seeking your help. I am writing to you today on the behalf of Oregon students at large to ask you to lead the State of Oregon to ban the Confederate flag from all of Oregon's public school campuses.

I feel as if this is an overdue Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR). With recent local and national events, I have seen more change in the previous three months than I have in 17 years. Recently the U.S has made many changes in how it represents itself. A major progression made is banning the confederate flag in certain areas. Oregon schools can be included in this progress, and we need your help to make that progress.

In late 2019, the Three Rivers school district in our home state of Oregon took the initiative by banning the confederate flag from their campuses. They banned any clothing that depicts the Confederate flag as well as other symbols associated with the Aryan Nation, KKK, and Nazi groups. The school district did this to "minimize disruption" because the presence of the confederate flag and its images disrupts education for all students regardless of their skin color. This was also the case in the North Bend school district. Two students got into an altercation over a hat doting the confederate flag. The school district promptly banned the flag from its campuses stating that "banning the image and flag is not a violation of free expression because schools have the legal authority and responsibility to maintain an environment that is free of harassment." This is a prime example that two Oregon school districts have implemented essential improvements to better the means of education and livelihood of their students. Banning the Confederate flag and its images should be an OAR enacted in all schools in Oregon.

In July 2020 the Pentagon side-stepped President Trump by making an extensive remodel to all military bases. Top U.S military leaders collaborated to ban the Confederate flag from all of its bases. Senior military leader General Milly states, "There is no place in our armed forces for manifestations or symbols of racism, bias or discrimination". These are the words from one of the most respected generals in the United States. If the military believes that the Confederate flag is a symbol of racism and discrimination, that is something we cannot ignore as leaders, students, and educators.

Banning the Confederate flag is far more than just an act to please some people. It shows students and educators that the State of Oregon sees them in their struggles to be considered equal and aiding them

in the fight against racism. The State of Oregon can aid students and educators of color by being inclusive of their culture and by acknowledging what this symbol actually represents--white supremacy and the oppression of Black Americans. Right now is a great time for Oregon to be a leader for its own citizens and throughout the United States and install this overdue policy.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss this further.

Respectfully,

Student A