

1 Whereas Oregon was the only free state admitted to the Union with a racial exclusion clause
2 in its Constitution; and

3 Whereas Oregon Constitutional Convention delegate John R. McBride, later a state Senator and
4 United States Representative, described the exclusion law as being “largely an expression against
5 any mingling of the white with any of the other races”; and

6 Whereas in 1859, the United States Congress voted to ratify the Oregon Constitution-including
7 its racial exclusion clause-and confer statehood on Oregon; and

8 Whereas Article I, section 35, of the Oregon Constitution, was legally invalidated by the ratifi-
9 cation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1868; and

10 Whereas despite its unconstitutionality, section 35 remained formally in the Oregon Constitution
11 until it was repealed by Oregon voters with a 1926 ballot measure; and

12 Whereas it wasn’t until 2002 that Oregon voters removed references to the 1857 referendum and
13 its overtly racist language from the Oregon Constitution; and

14 Whereas although Oregon’s three exclusion laws were all later rescinded, they largely suc-
15 ceeded in their aim of discouraging free blacks from settling in Oregon, ensuring that Oregon would
16 develop as a primarily white state; and

17 Whereas it is imperative to teach current and future Oregonians about our racist history in
18 order to fully understand the realities of racial oppression and to address the continued impacts of
19 systemic racism on our state and nation; now, therefore,

20 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

21 That we, the members of the Eighty-second Legislative Assembly, recognize Oregon’s racist
22 history, including the exclusion clause written into the Oregon Constitution at the time of statehood;
23 and be it further

24 Resolved, That we honor those members of the Oregon Constitutional Convention in 1857 who
25 exercised great courage and humanity by voting against the inclusion of racist language in the
26 state’s founding document.

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