



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support of SB 1

January 31, 2023

Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Boquist and members of the committee,

My name is Khanh Pham, State Representative for House District 46. I am proud to co-chief sponsor SB 1, along with Senate President Wagner, because it so greatly aligns with the work I pursued as Vice Chair of the House Revenue Committee last session to **create and view Oregon's tax policy with a lens towards racial equity.**

SB 1 would enable voluntary self-identification by Oregon tax filers of their race and ethnicity on an optional form. This allows the Department of Revenue to collect self-reported race and ethnicity data from Oregon taxpayers to help determine racial inequalities in homeownership, income, wealth, and tax rates. Oregon's tax system is tied to the federal tax system, and because federal tax forms do not collect race and ethnicity data, we do not know how well our tax programs and credits are reaching Oregonians who are entitled to them. As a legislator, I frequently ask about the disparate impacts of a particular tax policy, and the answer is frequently "We don't have enough data about that."

This bill can help ensure that our state agencies involved with revenue and taxation have better data to address tax disparities in the future. Right now, because we do not collect this data, we do not have a clear picture of how well different tax filers across the state are served by the systems we have - whether it's in tax credits, federal dollars given through tax filing, or tax filing assistance and resources that can help Oregonians take advantage of tax benefits that are designed for their taking.

To ensure equal access to opportunity, we need to make sure that our tax policy is equitable for all Oregonians, whatever our race or ethnic background. Otherwise, our tax policies will end up widening the systemic wealth and income inequalities between white Oregonians and communities of color in our state.

To create a more inclusive future, **we must legislate our values.** Allowing tax filers to name their race and ethnicity allows our communities to be more visible, to have their financial stories better seen by the government and policy makers. In addition, when we ensure it's optional, we don't violate the principles of self-determination in that process.

I believe that we measure what we care about. We legislators can craft better policy when we have more data to meet the specific needs of different communities. As a legislature, we have been working on several initiatives to get better data as a State in order to better serve Oregonians. We collect more race/ethnicity data in health care for better patient outcomes. We collect race/ethnicity data in education for better student

outcomes. We need to do the same for tax policy to ensure we target our tax expenditures to our neighbors with the greatest needs. **Our tax system needs to be working fairly for all, not just the privileged, and that is possible only with this data in hand.**

I urge your support for SB 1. Thank you!