

## Testimony in Support of Oregon [Senate Bill 776](#)

Jacob Mestman, Sandy, Oregon

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Dear Senators:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB776 on this very important issue of reparations. I am testifying as a white person who is very troubled at the state of racism that is very real and persistent today in the state of Oregon. I am urgently asking you to support this legislation.

We talk about celebrating equity and diversity but I believe that to truly embrace these ideals, we must FIRST take necessary actions to repair harm.

There cannot be celebration when Black Americans in Oregon are experiencing daily discrimination, wage inequalities, higher rates of unemployment, housing insecurity and are more likely to experience police violence and incarceration due to the color of their skin.

This document, [“Timeline of Oregon’s Racial and Education History”](#) put together by Elaine Rector and posted on the City of Portland website contains details about the very troubling history of racism in Oregon.

Please read it before voting on this legislation and ask yourself - what has been done to repair so many years of mistreatment, pain, suffering and trauma to Black people in Oregon?

The effects of this legacy of discrimination outlined in Elaine Rector’s timeline continue to impact the lives of Black people in Oregon in so many ways - - this is heartbreaking, upsetting and unjust.

We SAY that we hold up the values of diversity and equity but if we do not acknowledge our history and current state of racism and take this opportunity to establish a task force reparations in Oregon then our actions tell a different story.

To heal from this legacy means to take responsibility for our actions and our participation NOW in these systems of oppression and support SB776

True change is not going to come from talking about change, it's going to come from repairing harm - this bill will be the first step in moving forward and taking action to repair harm. In order to move forward together in a just society, we must do this.

I urge you to support this bill to establish a task force on reparations because it is the right and just thing to do.

Thank you,

Jacob Mestman