

Submitter: Lou Ann Bennett

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal
and World Affairs

Measure: SB776

I am a white Oregonian in support of SB776 and I urge your support too. I am in favor of Oregon being one of the first states of our Nation to examine, reckon and account for the harms and cruelty of slavery which continues accumulating as injustices passed down for generations robbing their descendants of human rights and general wealth. The lingering effects of Jim Crow laws and policy decisions, share cropping, convict leasing, redlining, unequal education, the militarization of police, the "war on drugs," and the era of mass incarceration all contribute to institutionalized racism, inequality, and discrimination, ensuring Black people are subjected to continued injustice.

Oregon's past of upholding Black exclusion laws and the many harms these laws perpetuated is worth investigation to know the extent of Oregon's amends owed to African Americans. It wasn't that long ago the Legacy Emmanuel Hospital projects displaced the prominent Albina black community and the agreements have still not been upheld. Reparations isn't just about slavery, it is about acknowledging and making right the wrongs that were inflicted upon our Black community members. Reparations for our African American citizens is a moral imperative.

The follow sets the precedent to support SB776: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976), which the U.S agreed to this treaty gives people the right to an effective remedy for human right violations committed against them, including racial discrimination. Also, under the international human rights law (U.N. General Assembly Resolution 50/147 of 16, December 2005), governments have an obligation to provide effective remedies for violations of human rights; and victims, people who individually or collectively suffered harm, should receive full and effective reparations that are proportional to the gravity of the violation and the cumulative harm suffered. Lastly, in 1980, the U.S. Congress established a commission to investigate the forced relocation and internment in camps of Japanese Americans and others during World War II, which paved the way for a formal reckoning with these serious human rights abuses, including financial compensation to surviving victims.

The United States has a long history of affirmative action for Whites - from the various land acts, to Indian, Negro, Mexican, Chinese and Japanese removal acts to the G.I. Bill to redlining by the federal housing authority. My personal ancestors have benefitted from these generationally accrued status, opportunities, land and wealth.

Please take action to pass SB776 so all Oregonians, my white self included, can be free of the psychological stress, injustice and threat of future harm to us all, especially our Black community members. I want to live in a state that leads the nation, where all people are treated humanely; where we can be honest of our past, own the harm done, and address it meaningfully. May truth lead the healing of our State and Nation. May we make decisions toward wholeness to be united.

Thank you for sponsoring SB 776. I look forward to discovering how I can be part in moving it along.