



Date: March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
To: Senate Committee on Human Services  
From: Jennifer Parrish Taylor, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for the Urban League of Portland  
Re: Support for Community Task Force Involvement, SB 694

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 694. My name is Jennifer Parrish Taylor, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Urban League of Portland. The Urban League of Portland is one of Oregon's oldest civil rights and social service organizations, empowering African Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment, health, economic security, and quality of life across Oregon and SW Washington.

Our legislative process aspires to make laws that equitably serve us all. But when legislative workgroups and task forces lack diverse voices, the process often creates policies and rules that don't support – or worse, negatively affect – people across the state, particularly Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other Oregonians of color. By requiring that policy-making tables integrate community-based organizations and people with lived experience, Oregon would generate better and more equitable outcomes in housing, health, business, public safety, and education.

Part of the work we do at the Urban League of Portland includes our participation in various task forces and panels; we know that if our voice, the voice of our community is not in the room, that perspective is often left out of the conversation. For us, it is vitally important that those with lived experience, those who are closest to the issue, must be a part of the conversation, decision making, and the solutions that impacts them the most. In including community members with lived experience, the various crises that our state faces often become abstract, with them there, issues are now given a human face and story. Senate Bill 694 will ensure equitable policy outcomes by requiring task forces and workgroups to include the people who are most affected by these policies. We ask that you support Senate Bill 694.

Respectfully,

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