



To: Senate Committee on Rules
From: Imagine Black
Re: Support for SJR 33
Date: April 25, 2023

Chair Lieber and members of the committee:

I am writing to express my resolute support for Senate Joint Resolution 33. If approved by Oregon voters, this constitutional amendment would enumerate the rights of those who live every day of their lives outside of the binaries we so often assign to gender and sexuality, and would affirm that the State of Oregon and its political subdivisions are obligated to ensure that all people within the borders of this State are treated fairly under the law.

It is critical that we recognize the intersectionality of discrimination and understand that people often face multiple forms of oppression simultaneously. This is especially true for Black people and other people of color who have historically faced discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality. This discrimination ranges from subtle microaggressions to outright violence and hate crimes, and has created a long history of trauma within those of the African diaspora. .

For Black folks capable of pregnancy and giving birth, abortion is an issue of special concern, as we experience significantly higher rates of maternal mortality compared to other racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In fact, Black folks are 243% more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than non-Black people. In addition, for Black parents with higher incomes and college educations have worse maternal mortality outcomes than their white counterparts who haven't graduated from high school. Due to systemic racism in healthcare systems, this increased risk of death is found even if they develop complications at the same rates as non-Black people. This is compounded by inadequate or inaccessible prenatal care, misdiagnosis, and mistreatment during and after pregnancy.

Similarly, Black LGBTQIA+ people experience high rates of violence and discrimination, which often results in limited access to healthcare and support. Across the board, the more "different" a person is from a straight white man, the more likely they are to experience discrimination and mistreatment under the law.

SJR 33 is a powerful recognition of the importance of equality under the law for all individuals, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic. It seeks to challenge and eliminate disparities in the equal protection of all by codifying rights that have always existed and should have always been protected.

Danita Harris,
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