

Submitter: RONALD HARRIS  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: SB1583

Dear Oregon Legislature,

I am writing this letter in support of SB1583. We are in a delicate time in American history, grappling with decisions about which parts of our past to include in the education of our youth. As a Black Queer Male Nurse residing in Portland, OR I strongly believe that our history is vital and should not be omitted from public-school curriculum.

Currently, healthcare institutions are implementing health equity grants aimed at educating healthcare professionals about Oregon's history and its impact on marginalized groups. As a Detroit native, my understanding of Oregon's history has deepened since moving here and becoming involved with the Alliance of Black Nurses Association of Oregon (ABNAO), as well as working within the local health systems.

It is your responsibility to afford everyone an equal opportunity to succeed in society. Denying marginalized communities access to their cultural and historical education, while failing to educate others outside these communities, puts them at a disadvantage. Embracing and understanding our differences fosters a stronger community, allowing us to recognize each other's humanity rather than focusing on our disparities.

History is often fraught with challenges, and Oregon has a dark history regarding race relations that continues to affect marginalized communities today. As legislators, it is incumbent upon you to ensure that all members of our community have equal access to a comprehensive understanding of history, without discrimination in public school materials.

As a Black citizen of Oregon and a healthcare professional, understanding our history is crucial for comprehending the struggles faced by Black and other marginalized communities, which directly contribute to health disparities. Teaching about these disparities in public education empowers youth to advocate for their families and communities, ultimately leading to a reduction in healthcare costs. Our children are the future, and the decisions made today not only impact us but also shape their ability to comprehend diverse perspectives and move forward with a complete understanding of history.

Thank you for your time, and I implore you to make the right decision.

Sincerely,

Ronald Harris, BSN, RN, MSN