



VOICES UNITED.
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

March 23, 2021

House Committee on Rules
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2337

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chair Drazen, Vice-Chair Holvey, and
Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is to be a voice and force for the common good for all Oregon children, ensuring all children have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First for Oregon. We elevate data and lived experience to prioritize children and center communities. We continue to connect a community of 115 advocates, coalitions, and organizations through The Children's Agenda, a legislative agenda championing equitable state legislative policies and shared investments to improve the lives of Oregon's children and their families.

Declaring racism as a public health crisis is a 2021 Children's Agenda priority. We support HB 2337 to acknowledge Oregon's racist history and its current policies that perpetuate systemic racism that cause harm toward Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Oregonians. To heal past and present injustices, Oregon needs to address the damaging impact of racist policies through strong and intentional actions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has nationally exacerbated health inequities. Due to institutionalized racist systems, chronic diseases are more prevalent in BIPOC communities. COVID-19 has put BIPOC individuals with underlying health conditions at greater risk to contract the virus and experience severe symptoms. Yet, BIPOC communities are still more likely to face economic, geographical, and linguistic barriers to access quality and culturally competent care.

HB 2337 with proposed amendments includes initial strategies and investments to address health inequities among BIPOC Oregonians and Oregon Tribes, and other aligned strategies are included in other 2021 proposed legislation. As Oregon declares racism as a public health crisis, we must invest and take steps to begin to transform our racist systems including:

The Children's Agenda

is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.



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- Expand and support the collection of REAL-D data to better understand population health and reveal unique health inequities
- Develop a statewide mobile health unit plan for BIPOC communities with culturally and linguistically staff to reflect the communities they serve
- Disrupt policy from maintaining racist outcomes
- Increase health equity through language access
- Increase community voice in the legislative process
- Remove barriers to increase access and quality of care in BIPOC communities

Nationally and state-wide, systemic racism has created a situation that is untenable. Immediate action must be taken to mitigate further harm and violence against BIPOC Oregonians and Tribes. Declaring racism as a public health crisis will provide Oregon a pathway towards an equitable future.

Thank you for your consideration and your service. We urge you to support HB 2337.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Chis Coughlin, Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director

Raquel Salazar, Policy and Communications Intern

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

View the 2021 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-childrens-agenda