

House Committee on Judiciary
Chair Jason Kropf
Vice-Chairs Andersen & Wallan

Honorable Chair, Vice-Chairs, and distinguished committee members,

I write to provide testimony in support of House Bill 3294.

I am an Oregon native, mother, lawyer, and community organizer whose Vietnamese refugee parents found a home in this state in the 1970's, much like your colleague Representative Daniel Nguyen, to whom I am grateful for bringing this symbolic and deeply meaningful legislation forward.

My family and I live in Lake Oswego. As you may know, Lake Oswego has a particularly dark, exclusionary history, even for Oregon standards. The city was developed in the early 1900s and marketed to the public as an affluent, white utopia. As such, it earned the moniker, "Lake No Negro." Many deeds of homes in Lake Oswego contain racially restrictive covenants from that era, which unabashedly kept minority and low-income populations out, specifically, Black and Asian people.

It is not lost upon me that, today, I live and own a home in a place that once would have only permitted me on this land as a servant to white residents. Knowing this history, it is an insult to injury to have my name and home ownership adjacent to hateful language that denies my basic humanity.

At this moment in history, communities like Lake Oswego are reassessing policies and systems that create barriers to a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society. Racially restrictive covenants—regardless of their legal enforceability—are emblematic of a shameful past where whole populations were shunned and excluded.

If we are to move forward and embark on a brighter future, one where all are welcome and valued, the language we use, particularly that enshrined in home ownership documents, should reflect who we are as a society and where we aspire to be.

This is why I support HB 3294. Redacting racist, hurtful, archaic covenants from deeds and the chain of title is a necessary, obvious step in our work toward creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive state. I have full confidence that the legislature will work with county clerks to overcome any technical or practical concerns that stand in the way of this bill's passage.

Thank you for considering this testimony and for working toward making our communities more inclusive, equitable and safe for every person. I ask that you please support HB 3294 and move it forward.

Sincerely,



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