

Submitter: Elisabeth Zeller

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Judiciary

Measure: HB3294

When my husband and I bought our home, we knew that a restrictive covenant was possible. When I got our title documents I knew to read through all of them. And yet, reading those words attached to our new home was shocking. They are disgusting. They are antithetical to everything I believe in.

We knew that Supreme Court decisions and Oregon law had voided them.

And yet.

We were told that they are part of the real estate documents and that nothing could be done about them. Reluctantly we signed and committed to working to make our community more inclusive.

By signing we continue to perpetuate this garbage language.

Today we ask you to help us eliminate that for us and for all homeowners who want to sign a clean, non-discriminatory title.

I don't want to erase history. We must confront what has happened in the past and have information and data available to historians, journalists and those who seek to understand where we have come from.

But the time and place to do that is not when someone is purchasing a home – a place they want to feel safe and welcome.

Many states have enacted similar laws: Illinois has enacted a law to remove or amend racially restrictive covenants, as has Maryland. Other states have or are considering similar laws.

This bill retains the historical record but allows current and new homeowners to sign a cleansed, non-discriminatory title.