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**MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **2024 Legislation Endorsements of the Linn Benton Branch of the NAACP**

The 2024 Oregon Legislative Session may be short, but there is much to be accomplished. The Political Action Committee of our Linn Benton Branch of the NAACP analyzed proposed legislation to identify those measures that conform with our mission and further the goals of our organization. We vigorously dedicate our efforts to achieving political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and the elimination of race-based discrimination.

These nine bills currently under consideration by the Oregon Legislature earned the support of the Linn Benton Branch of the NAACP. They address a range of issues, from improving economic equity to enhancing child care access. We urge our membership, as well as partnering organizations, to join us in promoting passage of this legislation. We encourage our membership to act now to contact state senators and representatives and voice their individual support for these bills. We ask allied organizations to identify legislation that supports their missions, and to coordinate with us to promote initiatives that contribute to achieving racial and economic justice now, and in the future.

### **SB 1532**

#### **Establishing Immigrant and Refugee Student Success Plan**

Directs the Department of Education to develop and implement a statewide education plan for students who are asylum seekers, refugees, or any other immigrant.

#### **Relevance to NAACP**

Seeks to develop effective educational strategies that work for students of various cultural backgrounds, improving community strength and accelerating participation in our democracy.

### **Benefits**

- Immigrant and refugee students can share unique experiences such as developing English language skills for the first time in a formal educational setting, navigating Oregon's specific curriculum standards and measurements of learning success, and adjusting to new cultural norms and expectations to build connections with other students.
- Immigrant and refugee students can feel isolated and disconnected within classrooms and curriculum that were not designed with them in mind, which in turn, can negatively impact their social, emotional, and mental wellness, as well as their ability to learn. This measure seeks remedies for this disadvantage.

## **SB 1533**

### **Expanding Voters' Pamphlet Translation**

Increases, from 5 to 10, the number of languages that are commonly spoken in a county, other than English, that the Secretary of State must include on a publicly available list and into which the Secretary must translate voters' pamphlets. Requires 300 or more individuals in a county to speak one of 10 listed languages to require a county voters' pamphlet to be translated into that language.

### **Relevance to NAACP**

Encourages greater participation in voting by giving minority communities access to the tools they need to do so in the language they understand.

### **Benefits**

- Participating in our elections affects the ability of communities of color, immigrants, and refugees to elect candidates that will champion issues that support their wellness and prosperity and reflect their values.
- Provides language access to underrepresented communities in Oregon, enhancing their participation in democratic government.

## **SB 1537**

### **Boosting Affordable Housing Production**

SB 1537 includes a multimillion dollar investment package from existing state resources requested by Governor Kotek. Requires a portion of new development to be affordable. Within any expansion areas, 30% of all housing units are legally restricted for affordable housing. Provides a one-time exemption for cities in need of land and affordable housing to add land for housing to their urban growth boundary. Creates the Housing Accountability and Production Office to support housing production in local communities.

### **Relevance to NAACP**

- Will improve housing affordability and, indirectly, can assist in reducing homelessness.

### **Benefits**

- Establishes programs to provide financial assistance at all stages of the housing development process.
- Projects must meet minimum density requirements, focusing on small and moderate size homes that are more affordable.
- Land added can only be urban reserve, non-resource land, or exception land – **NOT** high-value farm or forest land outside of urban reserves already designated for future urban development.
- Creates a Housing Accountability and Production Office supporting housing developers and cities in implementing state housing production laws.
- The 30% requirement in Oregon would be one of the strongest requirements in the United States. Oregon has a critical need for guaranteed affordability, as existing land within Urban Growth Boundaries (outside of Portland) has no affordability requirement.

## **SB 1577**

### **Automatic voter registration for some Oregon students**

This bill would extend Oregon's automatic voter registration to eligible students applying to enroll in Oregon's higher education public institutions. The bill calls for the Oregon Dept of Revenue to forward relevant registration data to the Oregon Elections Division, for those students who are applying and who are eligible to vote.

### **Relevance to NAACP**

Promotes voter registration of students admitted to Oregon institutions of advanced education.

### **Benefits**

- This bill seeks to get additional individuals on the voter registry who are of age to vote. It has long been difficult for volunteers and organizations to encourage students at higher education institutions to complete steps to become registered voters in Oregon. For students this often seems like a daunting and confusing task. This bill removes the confusion and allows students to be easily and nearly automatically enrolled as registered voters.
- Students who are eligible to vote but have not applied for an Oregon driver's license will have a convenient means of registering to vote.

## **SB 1583**

### **Prohibit discrimination in selecting public school teaching materials**

Prohibits discrimination when selecting textbooks, instructional materials, program materials or library books used in Oregon's public schools.

### **Relevance to NAACP**

Seeks to assure that textbooks describe all facets of United States history and society, including experiences and contributions of marginalized communities; disallows discriminatory removal of school library books that offer support for students of non-traditional gender identities

### **Benefits**

- SB 1583 prevents school boards and district personnel from banning textbooks or library books simply because they include stories about BIPOC, queer people, people with disabilities, or any other group protected from discrimination.
- Access to books provides an opportunity for understanding, compassion, and empathy when readers can connect with characters whose identities or experiences may be different from their own.
- At the state level, the Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse run by the Oregon State Library [tracked 93 attempts to remove books](#) or other materials at libraries throughout the state between July 2022 and June 2023.

## **SB 1595**

### **Family Financial Protection Act**

Strengthens protection for consumers who are sued by debt collectors and have wage or bank account garnishments or liens on their homes. This bill would also make it easier for consumers to fight back against debt collectors and debt buyers who try to collect from the wrong people.

### **Relevance to NAACP**

Reduces financial stress of poorer families by controlling debt collection activities.

### **Benefits**

- Allows economically stressed families to shelter a larger portion of needed income from debt collection.
- Oregon's debt collection laws are out of date. Under current Oregon law a debtor can only shield \$40,000 of a home's value from collection. SB 1595 proposes that \$150,000 for a single person and \$300,000 for couples be shielded.
- By 2027, the amount exempted from wage garnishment will increase to the value of Oregon's standard minimum wage per week. This would be a change from \$284 per week or 75% of net wages whichever is lower.
- The proposed legislation will also prevent debt collectors from wiping out someone's bank account. Oregonians would be able to maintain the first \$2500 to pay for basic

needs while paying off debt.

- Oregonians will have longer to file a complaint against a debt collector as the legislation allows three years rather than the current one year.

## **HB 4131**

### **Funds the Oregon Individual Development Accounts Initiative**

This measure provides funds to support financial security and progress towards a self-determined savings goal through this [matched savings program](#). Individual development accounts (IDAs) are personal depository accounts, hosted by a financial institution and funded by Oregon Housing and Community Services. These accounts allow persons of low-income to build wealth and save money to achieve financial independence. Deposited funds are matched at a five-to-one ratio by the financial institution, enabling the account holder to build resources to help with home purchases or repairs, fulfilling an educational goal, developing and launching a small business, or investments including assistive technology to increase independence, vehicle, rental, debt repayment, and emergency savings.

#### **Relevance to NAACP**

- Improves opportunities for persons of low-income to gain financial security.

#### **Benefits**

- For over twenty years, the Oregon Individual Development Account (IDA) has helped low-income Oregonians achieve financial stability by providing matched savings opportunities. As we work to address the affordable housing crisis, IDAs will continue to be one of our best tools to make homeownership more attainable,” said Senator Kayse Jama, (D-East Portland, Damascus, Boring).
- Over 17,000 Oregonians, in 35 of Oregon’s 36 counties have opened an IDA, with support from over 70 community-based organizations. To date, \$68 million in matching funds have gone to Oregonians. More than 2,600 Oregonians are currently saving through an IDA.
- In the last two years, nearly half of \$13.8 million in matching funds went to Black, Indigenous and People of Color statewide.
- An estimated 70% of the current demand for IDAs will go unmet without additional funding. With increased financial tools and resources, IDA savers can create jobs, find a home to depend on, and increase earned income.

## **HB 4151**

### **Economic Equity Investment Act**

Directs the System of Care Advisory Council to establish a subcommittee on the Youth Behavioral Health Workforce. Requires the subcommittee to submit an initial report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to behavioral health not later than

September 15, 2024, and a final report to the Legislative Assembly not later than December 15, 2025.

### **Relevance to NAACP**

Supports community mental health by establishing a subcommittee to examine the adequacy of the youth behavioral health workforce in Oregon.

### **Benefits**

- According to Mental Health America's Youth Ranking 2023, Oregon ranks last out of all states, with Oregon youth having higher rates of mental health problems and lower rates of access to behavioral health care than any other state.
- Provides an opportunity through the establishment of a Child Behavioral Health Task Force to further explore pilot programs, training and certification structures and the range of professions engaged with children and youth. Its intent is to foster better connected systems and ease barriers to employment.
- The Advisory Council will seek advice from representatives of culturally specific organizations that represent underserved communities.

## **HB 4158**

### **Child Care Facilities Fund**

The measure creates the Home and Small Center Child Care Fund in the State Treasury and directs the Oregon Business Development Department, in consultation with the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), to administer the fund. The measure requires Business Oregon to administer a grant program to provide financial assistance to child care facilities that serve no more than 75 children for certain allowable costs related to expanding or establishing child care infrastructure.

### **Relevance to NAACP**

- Improved availability of child care for working Oregonians through providing financial assistance to child care providers.

### **Benefits**

- Even if Oregon had a sufficient child care workforce, Oregon would not have the physical space necessary to provide care for all children who need it. It is critical to invest in child care infrastructure to meet the growing need for suitable space for safe, affordable, and accessible child care.
- The measure takes us one step closer to ensuring that Oregonians and their families have access to affordable child care that meets all their needs by providing dedicated and flexible funds to child care providers to start or expand their businesses.