

Oregon Commission on Black Affairs

OCBA

2015–17 Report
to the Governor
and Legislature



The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs 2015 - 2017 Report to the Governor and the Legislature



1 ABOUT THE OREGON COMMISSION ON BLACK AFFAIRS

Our vision:

We serve the people of Oregon to empower and support the African American and Black community through our special roles as policy advisors to Oregon state policy makers and leaders. The OCBA is a catalyst that empowers partnerships between state government and our community in rural and urban areas to ensure success for all African American and Black Oregonians by addressing longstanding and emerging issues at the policy level.

Our mission:

The mission of the OCBA is to work for the implementation and establishment of economic, social, legal and political equality for Oregon's African American and Black communities.

Our principles and Values:

- Equity for Oregon's African American and Black communities in jobs and the economy, education, health, safety, family stability, environment, and civic engagement.
- Equal treatment and protection against discrimination.
- Access to helpful information on services and available resources.
- Working in partnership on research and policy analysis of longstanding issues and barriers to success within the African American and Black communities statewide.
- Inclusion of viewpoints of the African American and Black communities in policy making at the state level.
- Celebration of and education about the contributions and achievements of Oregon's African American and Black communities.

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Our Statutory Goals and Strategic Priorities

- Advocate for equitable policies assuring the success of Oregon's African American and Black communities at the state level.
- Engage community and state partners to promote equity for African American and Black communities statewide.
- Study and analyze issues affecting the African American and Black communities statewide and recommend policy remedies to state policy makers.
- Grow and develop leaders in the African American and Black communities at the state level in all branches.
- Increase the viability and visibility of the contributions and achievements of Oregon's African American and Black communities statewide.



OCBA is actively engaged in its statutory work focused on 7 Strategic Priorities each biennium:

1. Education
2. Jobs and the economy
3. Healthcare
4. Justice, safety and policing
5. Stable families and housing
6. Environmental Justice/Equity
7. Civic engagement

Who we are:

The OCBA is composed of nine distinguished community members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, along with two legislators, appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House respectively. See OCBA member bios:

<http://www.oregon.gov/OCBA/Pages/commissioners.aspx>

OCBA Commission members 2015-17

Appointed by the Governor

James M. Morris – Chair, Portland
Robin Morris Collin – Vice Chair, Salem
Mariotta Gary-Smith – Portland
Kayse Jama – Portland
James I. Manning – Past Chair, Eugene
Musse Olol – Portland
Gwendolyn Trice – Enterprise

Appointed by the President of the Senate

Senator Rod Monroe – Gresham

Appointed by the Speaker of the House

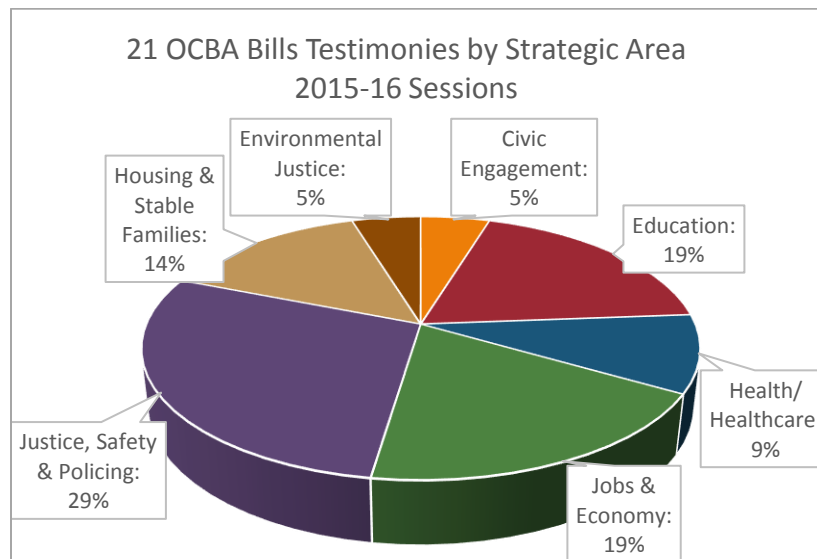
Rep. Lew Frederick – Portland
Rep. Janelle Bynum – Clackamas

What we do:

The Commission members work collaboratively to raise awareness and address challenges facing African American and Black populations across the state. We do this by researching issues, informing discussions and providing advice for state policy makers, including the Governor, legislators and departmental leaders, on ways to improve the success of our communities throughout Oregon. We promote leadership of African American and Black individuals in state decision-making around issues that affect our lives and our success by recommending leaders from our community to the Governor for appointments to boards and commissions, and to the legislature for participation on taskforces and workgroups. Each legislative session OCBA commissioners go to the capitol and work with our community partners and legislators to support equitable policymaking in OCBA's 7 priority areas, testifying in support of bills that level the playing field for success and tracking these bills through the legislative process.

2 OCBA STATUTORY ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2015 - 2017

ADVOCACY



The OCBA monitored 60 bills in 7 strategic areas for the 2015 and 2016 legislative sessions and submitted or presented testimony on 21 bills before legislative committees. OCBA's testimonies emphasize the importance of African American and Black issues statewide in legislation concerning core strategic areas including: Justice, Safety and Policing; Jobs and Economy; Education; Healthcare and Environmental Justice/Equity.

OCBA leads the OAC's in discussion and passage of historic bills for African American and Black Oregonians and underrepresented communities, 2015- 2016:

- HB 4033, Educators' Equity Act. PASSED
- HB 4001, Tenant protections. Emerging issue: not yet passed.
- HB 4003, Extend law enforcement profiling workgroup. PASSED
- HB 4123, Relief from court fees. Emerging issue: not yet passed.
- HB 2177, Motor Voter. PASSED

2015-16 OCBA PRIORITY BILLS

Education

1. HB 4033, Educators' equity act, [Testimony](#), (OCBA), PASSED – 2016
2. SB 187A, Student data protection, [Testimony](#), (OCBA and OAC's), PASSED – 2015
3. SB 215, OEIB sunset, [Testimony](#), (OCBA and OAC's), PASSED – 2015
4. HB 3308A, HECC group on disparities, [Testimony](#), (OCBA and OAC's), PASSED – 2015

Jobs/Economy

5. SB 1532, Raising the minimum wage - ([OCBA invited testimony](#) on wage equity disparities among women and workers of color) PASSED – 2016
6. SB 454A, Employer sick time benefits, [Testimony](#), (OCBA and OAC's) PASSED – 2015
7. HB 2005, Employer sick time benefits, [Testimony](#), (OCBA and OAC's) PASSED – 2015
8. HB 2734, Brownfield contamination remediation, [Testimony](#), (OCBA, OCHA) PASSED – 2015

“The Advocacy Commissions serve an important role by weighing in with legislative testimony on issues of importance for their communities across Oregon. Their viewpoint contributes to legislators’ understanding of key issues and raises awareness on lesser known, emerging issues.”
Senator Rod Monroe

Healthcare

9. HB 4017, OHA Basic Health Plan, [Testimony](#), (OCBA, OCAPIA, OCHA) PASSED – 2016

Justice, Safety and Policing

10. HB 4003, Extend law enforcement profiling workgroup, [Testimony](#), (OCBA), PASSED – 2016
11. HB 4123, Relief from court fees, [Testimony](#), (OCBA) – 2016
12. HB 4128, Immigration consultant fraud, [Testimony](#) and [Floor Letter](#), (OCHA, OCBA and OAC's) PASSED – 2016
13. SB 822, Recording of grand jury proceedings, Joint Coalition Letter, (OCBA, OCAPIA) – 2015

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14. HB 2704, Recording of police officers, [Testimony](#), (OCBA) PASSED – 2015
15. HB 2002, CJC for profiling complaints, [Testimony](#), (OCBA and OAC's), PASSED – 2015

Stable Families and Housing

16. SB 1533A, Inclusionary zoning, [Testimony](#), (OCBA and OAC's), PASSED – 2016
17. SB 939, Programs for children of incarcerated parents, [Testimony](#), (OCBA and OAC's), PASSED – 2015
18. HB 4001, Tenant protections, [Testimony](#), (OCBA) – 2015

Environmental Equity/Justice

19. HB 4036, Clean energy and community solar panels, [Letter of Support](#), (OCBA and OAC's) PASSED – 2016

Civic Engagement

20. HB 2177, Motor Voter [OCBA testimony](#) before SOS Jeanne Atkins, Eugene public hearing, PASSED – 2015

2015 JOINT LEGISLATIVE DAY WITH URBAN LEAGUE OF PORTLAND

The OCBA joined its community partners the Urban League of Portland and Center for Community Organizing (CIO) for a joint Legislative Day at the Capitol in 2015. OCBA Commissioners joined the other attendees including college students, advocates and leaders from the Black community and faith communities around the state. The large group of participants gathered in HR 50 in the Capitol to be welcomed with presentations from legislators and other leaders. OCBA Commissioners and others visited in small groups for scheduled meetings with individual legislators and caucus staff on primary issues including profiling and affordable housing.



OCBA SUBMITS OSB COMPLAINT: LEADS OREGON'S CALL FOR STATE BAR RULING ON ASSISTANT DA'S STATEMENT ON THE PRACTICE OF PROFILING

The OCBA made headlines in 2016 as it reviewed and submitted a formal complaint to the Oregon State Bar, calling for a ruling on the Washington County Assistant DA's Facebook post:

"If you're looking for a terrorist, look at a young Muslim male. If you're looking for a gang shooter, look for a young black guy. If you're looking for a child molester or a mass shooter, look for a white guy. That's just common sense." Washington County Asst. DA, Zoe Smith

OCBA Chair, James Manning, and Vice Chair, Robin Morris Collin, noted in the OCBA's

statement that Prosecutors enjoy tremendous discretionary power over individuals within our criminal justice system. They have the power to choose whom to charge, what crimes to identify, what penalties to seek, what bail to urge, what witnesses to call, what evidence to present, what persons to give immunity from prosecution, what plea bargains to make, and what sentences to negotiate. They also exercise tremendous influence over the broad discretionary powers of the police whom they advise, and in terms of the decisions to charge crimes. Prosecutors are public lawyers who hold their power and exercise their power on behalf of the client – the people of Oregon. It is not about their personal prerogatives. Their use of the public power demands the utmost professionalism and accountability.

The way in which prejudice affects discretionary decisions is well understood by society in general, and by the bar association of this state. When race and religion consistently inform discretionary choices against people subject to the power of our criminal justice system, the system deprives those people of the most fundamental assurances of American justice: the presumption of innocence, and the promise of fair and unprejudiced treatment before the law. The integrity of our criminal justice system depends, in large part, upon the professionalism of the lawyers who prosecute criminal matters on behalf of the state.

Ethical self-restraint is the first and best protection of the principles of justice and professionalism in this powerful system. Absent meaningful principles of self-restraint, including self-reflection and public accountability, justice itself is damaged by the perception of racism, impunity, and corruption. Without trust in justice, our communities fall prey to the double bind of criminality on one side and injustice with violence on the other.

They noted that that both the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct and the American Bar Association recognize and demand professional accountability when official acts of power are motivated by racial and religious prejudice.

The OCBA remained the only formal group to submit a complaint to the Oregon State Bar about the Assistant DA's post, and the media followed the story as it unfolded. The State Bar concluded its deliberation in the spring, 2016, and found no actionable offense according to its rules of conduct.

AT OACO'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY, OCBA WINS LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL TO ADD STAFF SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND RESEARCH 2015-17

OCBA Chair James Manning joined the OACO Administrator and the Chairs from the Oregon Commissions on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA,) Hispanic Affairs (OCHA,) and Commission for Women (OCFW) to present the Advocacy Commissions' budget request to the Joint Ways and Means' General Government Committee requesting to invest in adding a Policy Analyst to the administrative staff of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO) which supports OCBA and the other Advocacy Commissions. The legislature agreed and approved a

new budget for OACO that added its first Policy Analyst position to assist with legislative analysis, bill tracking, policy research, and supporting the statutory work of the OCBA and



OAC's. The Policy Analyst is the first new position for the Advocacy Commissions' Office since its inception in 2005 and represents to policymakers the maturing importance of the wise counsel and support of the Advocacy Commissions to their work, and building success for

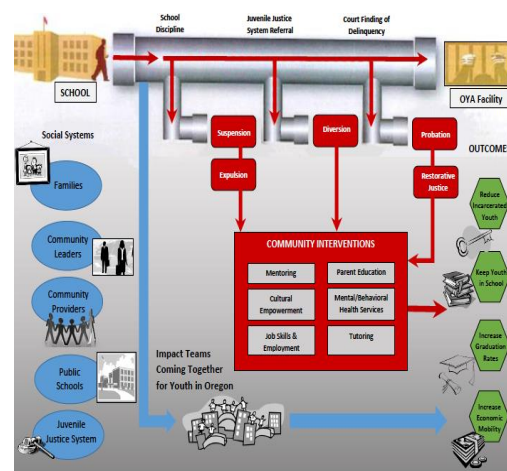
African American and Black communities statewide.

PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

The OCBA provides Masters, PhD, and Law students with for-credit public policy internships addressing our strategic priorities. The research is conducted jointly with state partners, and the Governor's Office to study data, best practices, effective policies, literature review, analyze gaps, suggest remedies and produce reports used by the Advocacy Commissions and their partners to inform new policies, develop strategic approaches and craft bills that improve the success of African American and Black communities statewide.

EFFECTIVE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES THAT REDUCE CONFLICT AND DISPROPORTIONATE DISCIPLINE FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR

To inform the Oregon Department of Education's recommendations for school discipline policies statewide, the OCBA partnered with ODE to research best practices in school practices of Restorative Justice. ODE and OCBA cosponsored a law externship for a 3L law student to conduct the research and provide findings and recommendations to ODE's School Discipline Advisory Council (OSDAC) on promoting models that guide students in handling conflict with mediation/restorative practices, reducing use of exclusionary discipline. Partners: OCBA, Oregon Department of Education (ODE), OSDAC, Governor's Office.



See the research outcomes here:

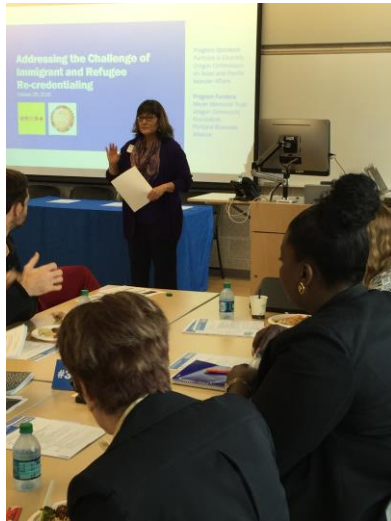
<http://www.oregon.gov/OCBA/PDFs/Allard%20-%20Restorative%20Justice%20in%20Public%20Schools%20report.pdf>

See the slide show here:

<http://www.oregon.gov/OCBA/PDFs/Allard%20-%20Restorative%20Justice%20presentation.pdf>

INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS' CREDENTIALS INTO THE OREGON ECONOMY

OCBA partnered in OCAPIA's research on best practices and policies in Oregon and nationally that promote effective workforce integration of immigrants with professional license/trades



certification from other nations. OCBA Chair Morris brought in the Dental Board on its best practices in immigrant credentialing, and OCBA Commissioner Musse Olol participated in a community forum on the subject lead by Senator Dembrow and OCAPIA Chair Mari Watanabe, in partnership with the Oregon Workforce Investment Board, and the Governor's Policy Advisor on Workforce. The participants, comprised of leaders in Oregon's primary immigrant communities and refugee groups, outlined the key challenges to professionals to credentialing in health related and other fields who received their training internationally and wish to practice in Oregon. The researcher, a Fulbright scholar from Morocco at Oregon State University, built on the outcomes of the forum to develop

comparisons of Oregon credentialing programs in health professions, an overview of best practices in credentialing nationally, and in Canada, and conducted a series of interviews with immigrant individuals who have experienced the credentialing process in Oregon, focused on significant barriers and ways to improve. Partners: OCAPIA, OCBA, Partners in Diversity (PID), Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB), the Governor's Office.

"Anecdotal evidence gets our attention, but when it comes to making policy decisions, there is a need for a sense of scale, for details to back up the stories. ... the sound, comprehensive studies now emerging from the internship program at the office of the Advocacy Commissions... have increased the capacity, the efficiency and the effectiveness of the commissions themselves, and their value to the communities they represent and the State as a whole."

Representative Lew Frederick

GROWING LEADERSHIP FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN AND BLACK OREGONIANS

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs and the other Advocacy Commissions statutorily work to grow the number and influence of diverse Oregonians within all branches of state government, its key initiatives, departmental leadership and policy work.

GWENDOLYN TRICE, DIRECTOR OF THE MAXVILLE HERITAGE CENTER, HONORED AMONG 5 INSPIRING LEADERS: 2015 WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT



As part of its leadership development work, the OCBA submits outstanding candidates for OCFW's Women of Achievement Awards. In 2015, OCBA celebrated its nominee, Gwendolyn Trice, as she was honored among the 2015 Women of Achievement.

Gwendolyn Trice, a native of La Grande Oregon, has dedicated the past several years to uncovering and documenting her family's migration to the West – African American loggers in search of promise in the early 1900's. She is the founder and Executive Director of the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center

in Wallowa County and her efforts have rekindled an interest in eastern Oregon's rural history.

The OCFW hosted its Annual Women of Achievement Awards with Governor Kate Brown and Master of Ceremonies SOS Jeanne Atkins. Friends and family members of those honored joined OCFW and OCBA Commissioners, legislators, community leaders, and students from area community colleges and universities to honor some of Oregon's most inspiring women. Each honoree shared her story of challenge and leadership with the attendees. The Women of Achievement are individuals who have led in civic rights and social justice in Oregon, serving Oregon as leadership models for the next generation of diverse women and girls.

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