



STATE SENATOR LEW FREDERICK

Senate District 22
Oregon State Legislature

PRESS RELEASE: CORRECTION

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Senator Frederick Fights for Justice and Dignity

The Oregon Senate Formally Approves an Apology to Robert Parker, Jr.

Correction: *The previous version of this release inaccurately stated that the Oregon State Bar formerly had a cap on African American members – the Oregon State Bar has never had a cap on African American members nor applicants.*

SALEM – The Oregon Senate passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 22 today, offering an apology to Robert Parker, Jr., who in 1992 was blocked from practicing law in Oregon due to racial bias and discrimination.

“Robert Parker is just another example of how oppressive systems have hurt Black and Brown Oregonians,” said Senator Lew Frederick (D-N/NE Portland) who introduced and carried Senate Concurrent Resolution 22. “At the time that Robert’s dreams of establishing himself in this state, and practicing law to support his community were interrupted, he knew then-Secretary of State, Governor Barbara Roberts and her late husband from his work in the Legislature. She describes knowing an “ideal new Oregon citizen,” someone who was bright with dreams of using his strengths and smarts to improve our state.”

“Unfortunately, racism caused Robert to be victimized by unfounded allegations and discrimination by professional colleagues. Those allegations were taken to a troublingly receptive audience,” added Senator Frederick. “And when Robert applied to the Oregon State Bar, after passing the Oregon Bar Examination and the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination, the Bar just 48 African Americans were members, he hoped to bring greater diversity to this white-dominated field.”

“Each allegation against Robert was later dismissed, vacated or determined to be unfounded. Racist systems hurt Robert – as they have so many – they impacted his future success and earnings and impacted his ability to practice law for over half of his life,” said Senator Frederick. “Today, the Senate affirmed that we should issue an apology, and that we call on the systems that let him down to allow him to live his dream of practicing law. It’s the least we can do.”

Senate Concurrent Resolution 22 formally issues an apology to Robert Parker from the 81st Legislative Assembly and requests the Oregon Court of Appeals and Oregon Supreme Court vacate past decisions which were informed by now-vacated decisions by the Government Ethics Commission. In addition, the Resolutions calls for the Oregon Supreme Court to order Robert Parker’s admission to the Oregon State Bar.

Earlier this month, the Oregon Supreme Court directed the Oregon Board of Bar Examiners to conduct a character and fitness examination and stated that should John Parker be admitted to the Oregon State Bar, all fees shall be waived, and his past Bar Exam scores be accepted.

The Resolution passed 24-4, it now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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