



OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

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Oregon Senate Democrats Pass Economic Equity Investment Program

Senate Bill 1579 creates program to invest in historically disadvantaged Oregonians

SALEM – Today, the Senate approved [Senate Bill 1579](#) on a vote of 17 to 9. This legislation directs Business Oregon to implement an Economic Equity Investment Program to award grants to qualified organizations that provide culturally responsive services to disadvantaged individuals, families, businesses and communities.

“The Equity Investment Act is a proactive investment in our communities statewide,” said Akasha Lawrence Spence (D-Portland), Chief Sponsor of Senate Bill 1579, who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “This measure is necessary to help communities from our rural center to our urban core become self-sufficient, attract private investment and become resilient in the face of economic shocks. Senate Bill 1579 will increase Oregon's capacity to build thriving communities.”

“We are in an immense moment of social reckoning in this country. I have spent nearly every one of 20 years in community advocacy focused on police and criminal justice reform,” said Senator Kayse Jama (D-Portland), Co-Chief Sponsor of Senate Bill 1579. “I am a Co-Chief Sponsor of Senate Bill 1579 because I know creating economic opportunities for all is fundamental to creating a fairer future for Oregonians who have been left behind.”

Business Oregon's Strategic Plan for 2018-2022 notes that persistent economic disparities exist among people of color and other represented communities, despite growth rates higher than the state's overall population. Household income and wages are lowest for Oregon's African American, Native American, and Hispanic communities. The Strategic Plan states that these groups are also disadvantaged in their access to capital and are underrepresented in employment within the professional and technical services sectors.

Senate Bill 1579 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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