



OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

Salem, Oregon
Oregon State Legislature

PRESS RELEASE

April 28, 2021

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Oregon's Outdoors Should be Safe for All

SALEM – The Oregon Senate passed Senate Bill 289 today, a bill which safeguards the public from bias and hate crimes committed on certain public lands. The bill passed on a 25-3 vote.

“Oregon is well known for its impressive and varied opportunities for outdoor recreation. Though Oregon is considered an environmental leader, its reputation as a white-only state and the state’s ingrained white supremacist history continue to perpetuate bias crimes that inhibit access to the outdoors,” said Senator Lew Frederick (D-N/NE Portland) who carried the bill.

“There are people in my district – and across Oregon – who are afraid to go to a state park or to get on a river or in a boat. They are afraid because of the threat against their physical and emotional safety simply for existing. They are afraid because of the real acts of violence committed against Oregonians of color, members of religious minorities, and LGBTQIA+ Oregonians who – like so many others – seek to reap the many rewards of recreating in Oregon’s outdoor spaces,” Senator Frederick added.

In Oregon, and nationally, bias crimes have been on the rise. Senate Bill 289 prohibits a person convicted of a first degree or second degree bias crime committed on waters of the state or publicly owned land used for outdoor recreation from utilizing a building, land, or water area under the jurisdiction of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The bill also requires the State Marine Board to block issuance of a safety education card and water access permit, suspend an already issued card and revoke the permit of anyone convicted of these bias crimes for a period of six months to five years.

Senate Bill 289 also requires inter-agency communication on bias crimes and sets a standard for how state agencies address those crimes. The bill adds bias crimes committed in specific venues to the variety of acts that could cause an outdoor recreation license or permit to be denied, suspended or revoked. In addition, Senate Bill 289 allows a perpetrator to engage in restorative justice activities like community service and anti-bias training to avoid other penalties.

“Simply put, if you are unable to refrain from harassing others in Oregon’s outdoors you should be barred from those spaces. These spaces should be safe and welcoming for all, so we can all equitably experience and benefit from them. I am hopeful this approach will help discourage these abhorrent acts and improve access to Oregon’s beauty,” said Senator Frederick.

Senate Bill 289 comes at the recommendation of the Governor’s Racial Justice Council’s Environmental Equity Committee, and it now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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