

Senate Republican Office

Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, S-323
Salem, Oregon 97301

April 5, 2013
CONTACT: Michael Gay
(503) 986-1950
(503) 781-8559

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ORSenateRepublicans>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SenateGOPPERS>

Legislation would consider agencies effectiveness as civil rights watch dogs

Salem, OR – A Senate committee heard legislation Friday morning that would catalyze a conversation around how well public agencies in Oregon are addressing civil rights issues. Senate Bill 768 would create a task force to examine how Oregon agencies and commissions are following their charge to champion inclusion and equity.

“My goal is to increase the capacity and scope of our civil rights advocacy and enforcement,” said Senator Bruce Starr (R-Hillsboro), who worked with the Oregon League of Minority Voters on the legislation. “Our hope is to discover if there is a more effective and efficient way all the entities that carry the charge to safeguard civil rights can achieve their mission.”

“We are excited about the prospect of challenging the old and rigid institutional frameworks of Oregon’s civil rights systems,” said Promise King, Executive Director of the Oregon League of Minority Voters. “The old ways of doing things is not sufficient and is no longer viable. We are thankful for this first step towards real reform.”

Senate Bill 768 would create a task force to convene civil right offices housed in the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Department of Justice, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Business and Consumer Protection, the Oregon Health Authority and the states advocacy commissions. The task force would evaluate out how well these groups are following their charge to champion for inclusion and equity.

The Task Force would discuss how to share resources and expertise, and how to enhance compliance mechanisms and enforcement.

Ideally this Task Force would present their findings and recommendations to the legislature in 2014.

“Yesterday was the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination,” said Starr. “The battle he started still goes on. We are responsible for guarding against the insidious creep of racism and bigotry.”

Senate Bill 768 is in the Senate General Government, Consumer and Small Business Protection Committee.

###