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Joint Statement of the Oregon Specialty Bars Associations Supporting the Oregon State Bar's Statement Against White Nationalism and Normalization of Violence

The Oregon Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the Oregon Women Lawyers, the Oregon Filipino American Lawyers Association, OGALLA-The LGBT Bar Association of Oregon, the Oregon Chapter of the National Bar Association, the Oregon Minority Lawyers Association, and the Oregon Hispanic Bar Association support the Oregon State Bar's Statement Against White Nationalism and Normalization of Violence and its commitment to the vision of a justice system that operates without discrimination and is fully accessible to all Oregonians.

Through the recent events from the Portland MAX train attacks to Charlottesville, we have seen an emboldened white nationalist movement gain momentum in the United States and violence based on racism has become normalized. President Donald Trump, as the leader of our nation, has himself catered to this white nationalist movement, allowing it to make up the base of his support and providing it a false sense of legitimacy. He has allowed this dangerous movement of racism to gain momentum, and we believe this is allowing these extremist ideas to be held up as part of the mainstream, when they not. For example, President Trump has espoused racist comments, referring to Haiti and African countries as "shithole countries" and claiming that the United States should have more immigrants from countries like Norway. He signed an executive order that halted all refugee admissions and barred people from seven Muslim-majority countries, called Puerto Ricans who criticized his administration's response to Hurricane Maria "politically motivated ingrates," said that the white supremacists marching in Charlottesville, North Carolina in August of 2017 were "very fine people," and called into question a federal judge, referring to the Indiana-born judge as "Mexican," when the race of his parents had nothing to do with the judge's decision. We are now seeing the white nationalist movement grow in our state and our country under this form of leadership.

As attorneys who lead diverse bar associations throughout Oregon, we condemn the violence that has occurred as a result of white nationalism and white supremacy. Although we recognize the importance of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the protections it provides, we condemn speech that incites violence, such as the violence that occurred in Charlottesville. President Trump needs to unequivocally condemn racist and white nationalist groups. With his continued failure to do so, we must step in and speak up.

As attorneys licensed to practice law in Oregon, we took an oath to “support the Constitution and the laws of the United States and of the State of Oregon.” To that end, we have a duty as attorneys to speak up against injustice, violence, and when state and federal laws are violated in the name of white supremacy or white nationalism. We must use all our resources, including legal resources, to protect the rights and safety of everyone. We applaud the Oregon State Bar’s commitment to equity and justice by taking a strong stand against white nationalism. Our bar associations pledge to work with the Oregon State Bar and to speak out against white nationalism and the normalization of racism and violence.



Derily Bechthold
President, Oregon Asian Pacific American Bar
Association



Angela Franco Lucero
President, Oregon Women Lawyers



Julia Markley
President, Oregon Filipino American Lawyers
Association



Kamron Graham
Co-Chair, OGALLA-The LGBT Bar
Association of Oregon



Alysia Harris
President, Oregon Chapter of the National Bar
Association



Chase Morinaka
Co-Chair, Oregon Minority Lawyers
Association



Iván Resendiz Gutierrez
President, Oregon Hispanic Bar Association