PROCLAMATION
The 100 Year Anniversary of the Removal of the Black Exclusion Clause from the Oregon Constitution

WHEREAS, Oregon entered the Union in 1859 as the only state admitted with a Black exclusion clause embedded in its Constitution. The constitutional clause was approved by Oregon voters in 1857 and reflected a broader history of exclusionary laws enacted by Oregon's provisional and territorial governments, including earlier Black exclusion laws adopted in 1844 and 1849; and

WHEREAS, these constitutional and statutory exclusion measures were part of a broader pattern of discrimination that created a legal system designed to prevent Black settlement and establish Oregon as a predominantly White state; and

WHEREAS, the human impact of these laws is powerfully illustrated by the case of Jacob Vanderpool, a Black business owner in Oregon City who in 1851 became the only known person formally expelled from Oregon under the 1849 exclusion law after a White competitor lodged a complaint; and

WHEREAS, Jacob Vanderpool's story continues to resonate today, including the fact that his last known publicly recorded act was registering to vote in California in 1886, a powerful testament to his determination to participate in civic life despite the discrimination and exclusion he endured; and

WHEREAS, on November 2, 1926, Oregon voters removed the exclusion clause from the state constitution, with 62.52 percent of votes cast on the amendment in favor of repeal, a significant milestone, though one underscored by the reality that nearly four in ten votes cast on the amendment supported retaining the racist clause;

WHEREAS, this proclamation seeks to openly acknowledge this history and recognize the presence, resilience, and contributions of Black residents and leaders within Hermiston's community, affirming that honoring this truth is vital to building a more inclusive and equitable community; and

WHEREAS, understanding this history is essential for addressing the ongoing impacts of exclusion, fostering community belonging, and guiding the work ahead toward equity, justice, and repair.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Doug Primmer, Mayor of the City of Hermiston, do hereby proclaim November 2, 2026:

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in the City of Hermiston and ask all Hermistonians to reflect on this history and commit to eliminating all forms of racism in our community.

SIGNED this 26th day of October, 2026

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Doug Primmer, Mayor