

# Civil Rights from Your Perspective

## Labor Commissioner documents Oregon struggles

Oregon Labor and Industries Commissioner Brad Avakian is getting the word out about a project he's taking to publish civil rights experiences from the perspective of Oregonians who personally or through their families lived the events themselves.

"My Civil Rights Story" is an effort to document the historic and present day civil rights struggles experienced by our diverse communities.

Avakian said what's needed are aspiring writers who have a personal story to tell.

"Together, we will illustrate

the progress - and sometimes regress - of civil rights from those who shared the experience themselves," he said. "While I will provide an introduction and conclusion to the book, generally discussing Oregon's civil rights history and themes, your stories will tell the real Oregon story."

"I encourage you to write about your or your family's experiences living and working in Oregon. Some stories will illustrate hard fought, and sometimes tragic, battles for equality. Others may portray the efforts lead-

ing to leaps forward in the progress of civil rights. Some may reflect the personal, quiet toughness of people doing what they must to survive in a culture that was not yet willing to recognize them fully. Whatever your story is, I am interested in hearing it."

Avakian is the paternal grandson of Armenian immigrants who fled genocide and oppression to seek a better life in America.

As commissioner of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, he enforces Oregon's civil rights laws, protecting people



Brad Avakian

from discrimination in employment, housing and in all public places.

He is a former state representative and state senator from Beaverton.

The personal stories submitted for the "My Civil Rights Story" project must be received by Feb. 14. Some stories will be selected for publication in the book. Other submissions will be presented on a website for all to read.

For suggestions on how to write your story, you can go to the website [mycivilrightsstory.net](http://mycivilrightsstory.net).

Submissions can be emailed to [brad@mycivilrightsstory.net](mailto:brad@mycivilrightsstory.net) or mailed to My Civil Rights Story, 17915 N.W. Loneroch Dr., Portland, OR 97229.

## Helping Homeowners with Repairs

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line maintain the exteriors of their homes.

The program allows homeowners to avoid potential code citations, loss of homeowner insurance and foreclosure while improving the appearance of local neighborhoods

A \$5,000 community grant from State Farm Insurance is making the outreach possible.

"We have made a commitment to work with responsible neighborhood organizations like Habitat for Humanity who share our business-oriented objective of healthy neighborhoods", said Chris Summeffs, State Farm Agency field executive.

Since 1991, Evergreen Habitat for Humanity has worked to improve living conditions for low-income Clark County residents. The non-profit organization works in partnership with people in need from all walks of life to develop communities by building safe, affordable housing. Homes are sold at no profit with a zero percent interest rate mortgage after the partner families complete their sweat equity hours.

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