



March 31, 2021

Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and members of the committee,

We at Basic Rights Oregon are writing in support of House Bill 3159. As the state's leading LGBTQ advocacy organization, we know that representation and being counted matters for the health of our communities.

As we work to further health equity for LGBTQ communities across Oregon, we hear consistently from people who do not have access to affirming health care. Much of the problem arises because Oregon providers do not have the information it needs to tackle severe health issues which disproportionately impact BIPOC, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, and other underserved populations.

Without concerted efforts to collect data on identities that affect patients' health, we cannot hope to address the disparate treatment that these communities receive. And the impacts can be deadly.

For example, it wasn't until more than six months into the COVID-19 pandemic that the Oregon Health Authority began receiving information from providers on the race and ethnicity of COVID-19 patients, despite the disparate impact of the disease on communities of color.

We have to do better for our communities which is why we strongly support the Data Justice Act (House Bill 3159). This legislation will empower our state to effectively address health disparities by asking providers to gather and share data with the Oregon Health Authority on patients' race, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Currently, healthcare providers are only required to collect race, ethnicity, language, and disability (REALD) data from COVID-19 patients, and are not required by law to collect any sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data.

The bill directs OHA to build a data system that will allow providers to report patients' REAL-D and SOGI data through electronic health record systems, and allow patients to self-report their data via an online portal. This data will be considered confidential and

not subject to disclosure under public-record laws, may only be released if it is anonymized and aggregated, and may not be considered by health insurers.

When health care providers and the Oregon Health Authority have data to understand the overwhelming health concerns our communities face, they can work on solutions. It's what we need and deserve to be healthy, safe, and supported.

We ask that you vote yes on House Bill 3159.

Thank you for your consideration.