



**Sharon Meieran**  
Multnomah County Commissioner, District 1

To: House Committee on Healthcare  
From: Sharon Meieran, Multnomah County Commissioner  
Date: April 1, 2021  
Re: Support for House Bill 3159

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Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sharon Meieran. I am a Multnomah County Commissioner representing District 1, and an emergency physician. Through both of these roles, I witness stark disparities in health outcomes related to race, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought inequities related to risk of exposure and access to care into sharp relief. I know this to be true, and my constituents who are Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrants, refugees, LGBTQI+ identifying, or hold other identities that are marginalized - who are more likely to be frontline, essential workers, live in close quarters or multigenerational households, live in a congregate care settings, or be incarcerated - have long recognized this at a level that is both empirical and visceral.

And yet our state's ability to move the needle in addressing health disparities is hampered by our lack of data. HB 3159, the Data Justice Act, will empower our state to effectively address health disparities by asking providers to gather and share data with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on patients' race, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The healthcare field is data driven; what we measure translates into changes in practices and priorities. It's time that we measure how identity intersects with health. The ability to demonstrate and define current inequities more precisely will help us create a more culturally responsive, inclusive, and accommodating healthcare system and will guide upstream investments in addressing social determinants of health.

I offer my wholehearted support for HB 3159.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Meieran