I support HB3159 as a Queer Pacific Islander community leader. For too long Pacific Islander health inequities have been obscured by data that is poorly disaggregated (i.e. the use of the category Asian Pacific Islander), or erased all together by a lack of collection and reporting, especially on intersectional experiences. Such as Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders.

Pacific Islander communities have been hit hard by COVID-19 and it is only until Oregon Health Authority began reporting out disaggregated data by race on COVID-19 that we began meaningful partnerships with health authorities and institutions. Supporting our community in COVID-19 recovery for Pacific Islanders requires data justice now. We know how critical this data is. It is what has propelled our ability to secure resources for a community whose systemic neglect came to a head with a global pandemic.

Health systems have had access to research and practices on racialized health disparities with little accountability or drive to implement thoughtful and consistent data practices that measures progress on serving those most impacted by systemic racism and neglect. Pacific Islanders cannot afford a data justice bill with no accountability mechanisms. We must push providers to understand that SOGI and REALD data are not just important, but required, if we are committed to dismantling the racism and neglect.

Pasifika people cannot afford to wait. The historical lack of movement on data justice and the erasure of our experiences is core to our community's high hospitalization and COVID-19 fatality rates in the State.