

February 16, 2021

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,

My name is Dave Pooser; I live in Washington County, in Hillsboro; my pronouns are he or him; and I'm testifying in support of SB 704, the ban on LGBTQ panic defenses here in Oregon.

As stepdad to a wonderful kid who is trans and non-binary and to a wonderful lesbian daughter, I'd like to add my two cents to why this bill is so important.

First and foremost, it's about letting Alex and Olivia feel safe in the state they've grown up in. Neither of them has been a victim of serious physical violence themselves, thank God, but the increasing violence over the last few years has them concerned for their safety. We've seen violence directed against LGBTQ Portlanders, and a horrific murder just across the river in Vancouver. As long as our state allows LGBTQ panic defenses, we're sending the message that those crimes aren't as important as crimes against straight cisgender Oregonians, and we're putting our LGBTQ neighbors at risk.

I actually moved to Portland from Dallas, Texas back in 2016 in part because I wanted to live in a state that was as focused on equality as Oregon is. (I didn't plan on meeting my now-wife here; that was just a bonus!) Oregon's reputation as one of the top states for LGBTQ rights is, and ought to be, a source of pride for Oregonians. This bill reinforces that reputation.

I urge you to support the safety of Alex and Olivia, and of every member of the LGBTQ community, and pass this bill to ban the LGBTQ panic defense.

Thank you for your time.

-Dave Pooser
Hillsboro, OR