



TO: Senate Committee on Rules
FROM: Nancy Haque, Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon
DATE: 2/3/2022
RE: Support for SB 1566

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the Senate Rules Committee,

Basic Rights Oregon supports Senate Bill 1566, which will change the way members of the Oregon Legislature are compensated. Our organization is committed to securing lived equality for all LGBTQ2SIA+ Oregonians, with an emphasis on racial justice, and this bill aligns squarely with our values.

The current salary for an elected member of the Oregon Legislature is just \$32,839 a year—hardly enough to live on in many places in Oregon, much less support a family on. The upshot from this is that the Oregon Legislature has historically been whiter, older, and wealthier than the public they serve. Some members of the Legislature do hold second jobs, but they are largely high-earning or flexible ones.

Basic Rights Oregon believes that you cannot expect a government to serve its most vulnerable if underserved communities are excluded from representing that government. To that end, we urge you to advance SB 1566, which would establish an annual salary for the members of the Legislative Assembly that is in line with the mean occupational employment and wage estimate for Oregon.

This adjustment would ensure that Oregonians from more economically and racially diverse communities will be able to serve long-term in the Legislature. Lived experiences are a valuable tool for any lawmaker, and being free to focus on their roles full-time will enable all legislators to better serve their constituents. Additionally, tying legislators' salary to the mean occupational employment and wage estimate means that their income will be more reflective of the folks they serve, and will rise and fall with the economy.

If we want Oregon to have a government of and for the people, we need to make running for office as accessible as possible. We ask you to please vote "yes" on SB 1566.

Thank you.