



February 27, 2023

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and committee members:

My name is Jonathan Frochtzwajg; I'm the Public-Policy Manager for Cascade AIDS Project, or CAP. CAP is the largest provider of HIV services in Oregon, and we run Prism Health, a safety-net clinic providing LGBTQ+ affirming healthcare.

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 491, as introduced. A number of our patients at Prism Health face financial barriers their dream of biological parenthood because their insurance doesn't cover fertility services—for example, freezing sperm or eggs prior to undergoing gender-affirming hormone therapy. By expanding private insurance coverage to these services, SB 491 will allow more LGBTQ+ Oregonians to afford care they need to create biological families.

Although we are disappointed that this legislation doesn't also require Oregon Health Plan to cover fertility services, we appreciate that it directs state agencies to develop a plan for doing so. We hope that in the not-too-distant future, income will not determine whether Oregonians can or cannot have children.

We are very pleased that, unlike similar legislation introduced in past legislative sessions, SB 491 does not exempt religiously affiliated insurers from its coverage requirements. We believe that the personal religious beliefs of individuals who oversee an insurance plan should never determine whether enrollees of that plan have access to services, fertility or otherwise. Furthermore, based on counsel from experts like Lambda Legal, we are confident that a religious exemption in this case is not legally necessary. We strongly encourage you to advance SB 491 as introduced.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JF', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jonathan Frochtzwajg
Public Policy & Grants Manager, Cascade AIDS Project

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