



March 16, 2023

TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

FROM: The Reverend Ryan Scott

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and committee members,

I am asking you to vote yes on HB 2002, because gender-affirming health care is life-saving care. This bill will close gaps in insurance coverage of critical care for transgender Oregonians.

As a queer clergyperson serving in rural Oregon I have seen first hand the need for comprehensive gender affirming care. In conservative leaning communities, such as mine, people who are transgender often feel excluded and alienated. Not having comprehensive access to gender affirming care only exacerbates this problem. Treatments that some call “cosmetic” are crucial to the well-being and health of trans people. These treatments enable trans people to live more full and healthy lives. By being able to fully live into their identity they will have more confidence and better self-esteem this improving their mental and physical health.

Oregon is already a leader on trans health care access, but gaps in insurance coverage still exist for care that is crucial for many trans people, including electrolysis (hair removal) and facial affirmation surgeries.

These procedures are seen as “cosmetic” under Oregon insurance policy, but I can assure you that for trans people, they are about so much more than cosmetics. There are several trans people in my congregation who have expressed to me their frustration with not being able to access this type of care thus delaying their transition process. These procedures would greatly improve their quality of life.

You have an opportunity to advance legislation that will be truly life-changing—and perhaps even lifesaving—for transgender Oregonians like those I pastor. Please keep my testimony in mind when you are voting on this bill, and please vote yes on HB 2002.

Thank you,

The Rev. Ryan Scott
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