

Submitter: Benjamin Sokoloff

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2002

Date: March 17, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Dr. Benjamin Sokoloff (Cascade AIDS Project | Prism Health)

RE: Support HB 2002

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Benjamin Sokoloff and I am writing to express support for House Bill 2002, Reproductive Health and Access to Care, which will help create a future in which every person in Oregon has the ability to make decisions about their own body and access the full range of reproductive, sexual, and gender affirming health care.

Everyone deserves access to lifesaving medical care. Nobody should be denied gender affirming care. In 2023 alone, more than 300 bills attacking LGBTQ+ people have been introduced to state legislatures across the country. As transgender rights in particular are under attack nationwide, Oregon has an opportunity to continue standing as a leader for LGBTQ+ rights and health care access. For too many Oregonians, reproductive and gender affirming care are still out of reach because of geography, income, or insurance coverage. Eighteen states currently have abortion bans or serious restrictions in effect, including our neighbor Idaho. This decreased access exacerbates existing reproductive health care deserts, especially in Eastern Oregon, as our state experiences a surge in out-of-state patients.

As someone who provides health care services to and is also a representative of the LGBTQ+ community of Portland I see every day the impact meaningful and appropriate care has on our community. I also see the impact of negligent and inappropriate health care among those who have moved here from other states or even from other parts of Oregon. I see it in the high rates of suicide and mental illness, the high rates of expulsions from families and homelessness, and in the many manifestations of physical illness as a result.

This is why I urge your yes vote on HB 2002. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Sokoloff, DO, AAHIVS