

FAIRSHOT FOR ALL

March 20, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
From: Fair Shot for All
RE: Support HB 2002

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

I am writing to you today to let you know that House Bill 2002, Reproductive Health and Access to Care, is a priority bill for the Fair Shot for All coalition, which includes 40+ community organizations across the state fighting for racial, gender, and economic justice.

Our coalition believes that HB 2002 will help create a future where *every* Oregonian has the ability to make decisions about their own bodies and has access to the full range of reproductive, sexual, and gender affirming health care. Access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health care is a basic human right and central to every Oregonian having a fair shot.

However, significant barriers to the full spectrum of care still exist in our state for many communities including: low-income Oregonians, those living outside of the I-5 corridor, women, LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals, immigrants, people with disabilities, and people who are Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color.

With the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, we've seen states across the nation take steps to ban and restrict access to gender-affirming care, denying transgender and gender-expansive people life-saving medical care. People in Oregon have already felt the impacts of the rapidly changing healthcare landscape, with the most significant burden falling on those who've struggled to access care long before this Supreme Court decision came down.

- 3/4 of Oregon counties do not have an abortion provider
- 30% of all Oregon hospital beds are in hospitals that may claim non medical exemptions to providing reproductive health services
- 1 in 5 individuals seeking abortion care had to travel long distances before the overturn of *Roe* - upwards of 350 miles for some Oregonians

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- 47% of Americans are not prepared to cover an unexpected \$500 expense, the average cost of a medication abortion without insurance
- Nearly 75% of transgender Oregonians do not live near a provider who has openings within a month to receive services. This can translate to years-long waitlists for life-saving gender affirming care.

The *Dobbs* decision has worsened the public health crisis around abortion care. 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.

In Oregon, we believe that everyone deserves access to high quality health care — no matter who we are, where we live, or how much money we make — and that includes the full spectrum of sexual, reproductive, and gender affirming care. For years, our state has led the nation in protecting and expanding access including: codifying abortion rights into state law; Oregon Health Plan coverage of gender affirming care in 2015; landmark protections and expansion of care through the 2017 Reproductive Health Equity Act (RHEA); and the creation of the Reproductive Health Equity Fund in 2022.

We also believe that everyone deserves access to life-saving medical care. That means that 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.

To address growing disparities and increased threat to our rights, Speaker Dan Rayfield, in collaboration with Senate President Rob Wagner and Attorney General Rosenblum, formed the Reproductive Health and Access to Care work group in 2022. Under the leadership of Co-Chairs Senator Lieber, Senator Steiner, Rep. Nelson and Rep. Valderrama, more than 80 stakeholders representing local community organizations, providers, national legal experts, patients, clinics and advocates worked to identify barriers for patients seeking care, the challenges healthcare providers and facilities face in delivering care,

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and the potential legal issues patients and providers may face. Through extensive research and discussion over 6 weeks, the work group established the following priorities to move Oregon forward in our work to ensure a more just and equitable health care system that can support us all by:

Protecting Providers and Health Centers:

- Protecting providers' ability to provide care to all patients who seek gender affirming care and reproductive healthcare in Oregon
- Preventing interference with health care centers and protecting providers from harassment and abuse
- Ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of providers is protected

Expanding Access to Care:

- Closing gaps in: insurance coverage for gender affirming care, contraception access on OHP, and reproductive healthcare services at public universities
- Enhancing access to care in medically-underserved regions through a pilot mobile health clinic program
- Addressing reproductive health care deserts by expanding services at existing health centers at public institutions

Ensuring Fundamental Rights:

- Protecting individuals from prosecution for seeking or supporting reproductive and gender affirming care that is legal in our state
- Codifying the right to the full spectrum of reproductive care
- Preventing individuals from being criminalized for any pregnancy outcome

We urge the swift passage of House Bill 2002.

Heather Stuart
Coalition Director
Fair Shot for All

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