

Submitter: Evelyn Kocher

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2002

My name is Evelyn Kocher and I use she/her pronouns. I am 27 years old, a sixth-generation Oregonian, and a proud trans woman.

I was a trans child. I have wished I could be a girl since I was six years old and never met a trans person until I got to college. I was only able to come out after saving up enough money to gain independence from my family and after overcoming years of internalized shame and self-hatred over who I was. I have had many successes before I transitioned--I lived in five countries, learned a dozen languages, graduated college with honors--and none of it healed this gnawing question inside of me. I have gotten extensive psychological treatment and all of it was conclusive--that I was trans and should transition in order to preserve my mental and physical health.

Since coming out, I have spent over \$30,000 on treatment that has helped me immeasurably. However, nearly none of it was covered by insurance. I have gone into thousands of dollars of debt to cover the cost of this treatment. I have worked 70 hours or more a week at two or three jobs for the last two years in order to come close to being able to afford to be the person I am today.

I realize that I am so incredibly lucky to have had the stability, whether that be financially, mentally, physically, or socially, to even have the option to do this. This is what passes for good fortune in the trans community. I don't want to be one of the lucky ones anymore.

I helped write and introduce HB 2002 and am here testifying on it today to help the trans community in Oregon get the care that they need.

My dream is simple: to live more days as my true self than I did before I came out. By simply existing as a trans woman of color, this dream is highly unlikely to be realized. I am many times more likely to be assaulted, killed, or die by suicide than cis people of the same background. The nationwide legislative assault on trans rights has only worsened our situation in this country. With this bill, we have a chance to make Oregon an exception and show our trans siblings that they--that WE--belong and are truly valued in this state.

For these reasons and for many more, I urge you to vote YES on HB 2002.