

Submitter: Benjamin Barnett

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2002

My name is Benjamin Barnett, and I serve as Rabbi of Havurah Shalom in Portland. While in this testimony I am speaking for myself, I know that my congregation as a whole, of over 500 households, joins me in enthusiastically supporting HB 2002. And we do so not in spite of our religious identity, but as an expression and affirmation of that identity. In Jewish tradition, as in many wisdom traditions, we uphold the rights of people to make choices about their own bodies, about whether to have children or not, and to raise families in safe and sustainable communities. And within Jewish tradition specifically, the understanding of when human life begins is different from traditional Christian understanding, so for us restrictions placed on reproductive freedom are a violation of our religious freedom. Most centrally, my tradition obligates us to create a society based on mutual care for one another, in which we fulfill our responsibilities to safeguard each others' freedom and well-being. So I wholeheartedly support laws that protect access to gender affirming healthcare, in addition to the full spectrum of reproductive healthcare, including abortion. I urge you to pass HB2002. Thank you.