



Service Employees International Union Local 503

72,000 public services workers, care providers, and non-profit employees in Oregon.

TO: Senate Human Services Committee
RE: Support for SB 99 with -2 amendment
ON: March 20, 2023

Chair Gelser Blouin and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, Please consider this testimony in support of SB 99 with the -2 amendment on behalf of SEIU Local 503. Our union represents workers across Long Term Care settings, including workers in Memory Care, Assisted Living, and Residential facilities. We appreciate that this bill is based in research, community engagement, and thoughtful in its approach. As Oregon's population ages, we know that more LGBTQIA2S people will need long term care services, and we want to help build a service delivery system that is welcoming, culturally appropriate, inclusive, and safe. SB 99 will help us get there.

Senate Bill 99 is a crucial step towards ensuring equal rights and protection for LGBTQIA2S+ residents in long-term care facilities. These individuals, especially older adults, have historically faced significant discrimination and marginalization. By establishing comprehensive guidelines and requirements for facilities and their staff, the bill aims to create a safe and affirming environments for all residents, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status.

Discrimination against LGBTQIA2S+ older adults in long-term care facilities can take many forms, including denying admission based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, forcing them to share rooms with residents who are not accepting or understanding, and limiting their access to appropriate medical care. These discriminatory practices can lead to isolation, depression, and deteriorating mental health among LGBTQIA2S+ seniors.

By implementing the bill, long-term care facilities will be required to provide training to their administrators and staff, focusing on understanding the legal, social, and medical challenges faced by LGBTQIA2S+ older adults. This training will promote better communication, understanding, and acceptance within the facility, helping to eliminate discriminatory practices and create a more inclusive environment.

In conclusion, SB 99 with the -2 amendment is a necessary and timely measure to protect the rights and well-being of LGBTQIA2S+ residents in long-term care facilities. By addressing the unique needs of these individuals and promoting staff training, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and respectful environment for all residents, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Thank you,
Alice Longley Miller, MSW, MPH
Long Term Care and Disability Policy Strategist
SEIU Local 503