



March 20, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Oregon Education Association

RE: Support for HB 2002

Chair Nosse and members of the committee,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 41,000 educators and education service professionals across the state, from pre-k to community colleges. Our members are classroom teachers, bus drivers, custodians, teacher assistants, school counselors, community college professionals and more.

On behalf of our members, the OEA would like to express our support for House Bill 2002, the Reproductive Health and Gender Affirming Care bill. As a union with a membership in the profession of education that is dominated by women we know that access to one's own medical decisions and bodily autonomy is paramount as we ensure access to health care in this state. We believe that the full range of reproductive, sexual, and gender affirming health care is a right for all Oregonians and not a privilege that should only be afforded to a few.

Given that the workgroup from last year convened with impacted communities, health providers and organizations working in this field have led to the recommendations now represented in HB 2002, we know this legislation centers the solutions our state most needs when it comes to truly giving a fair shot to those who face the most barriers in health care access.

In particular, we want to highlight the following provisions inside the bill that will mean an important next step for Oregonians:

- **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

As educators in public schools, we know that without fundamental reproductive health protections and access to gender affirming care we leave Oregonians in the position to question whether their right to choose when and whether to start a family is their own. Without HB 2002 we risk the lives of our students and young people's ability to seek medically necessary care if we do not affirm equal protections and coverage. Just as we know that meeting our students basic needs matters for their learning capacity and academic journey, access to health care providers and affordable health care is part of those basic needs.

We encourage your support of HB 2002, for our students, our educators and a better future.

Sincerely,

Michele Ruffin

Government Relations Consultant

Oregon Education Association