

March 21, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

RE: Support for HB 2002

Dear Chair Nosse and members of the Committee,

My name is Finn Gornick, and I am a resident of Portland, Oregon in House District 46. I am writing to urge your support for HB 2002, Reproductive Health and Access to Care. This bill will expand upon Oregon's Reproductive Health Equity Act (2017), ensuring that Oregonians have the right to make independent decisions about their healthcare and bodies with access to a comprehensive range of medically necessary reproductive, sexual, and gender-affirming care.

This care is not only necessary, but lifesaving. It is not about harming children or denying parental rights. Providing Oregonians with access to healthcare aligns with Oregon's proud declaration as an innovative state leading the nation in health systems transformation. We have come far as a national leader with Medicaid expansion, LGBTQIA+ rights, and the Oregon Health Authority's ambitious charge to eliminate health inequities by 2030. Failure to ensure access to comprehensive gender-affirming and reproductive care is a direct contradiction of our goal to eliminate health inequities and this will most acutely impact BIPOC and low-income Oregonians.

In the wake of *Roe v Wade*, our nation has enacted an array of abortion bans and serious restrictions. Oregon must commit to expanding reproductive care access, which is particularly salient for those in rural and low-income communities who reside in "care deserts", and the many people anticipated to seek care here because of their own state's broad criminalization of reproductive care.

This year, over 300+ anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced across the US, many of which specifically target transgender and gender-diverse people under the guise of "protecting children." Restricting or denying care due to reproductive status or gender identity will inevitably worsen the physical and mental health of Oregonians, the serious consequences of which include suicidality and death. The impact will be even more severely felt by our trans youth, who are at significantly higher risk of poor mental health and suicide.

As a transgender man, I have been fortunate to access medical and surgical care which has enabled me to live fully and thrive in the world. Without this care, I would not be here today to write this letter – literal lifesaving care is not for debate. Coverage of gender-affirming care must be strengthened and expanded; procedures and treatment that have been deemed by insurers as "cosmetic", such as hair removal and gender-affirming facial surgery, must be considered medically necessary.

House Bill 2002 will protect the health of Oregonians, bringing us closer to eliminating health inequities. It will protect the dignity and autonomy of human beings who require medical care and protect the dedicated providers who have committed to care provision

and the Hippocratic Oath, to do no harm. I urge you to support HB 2002 and ensure access to reproductive and gender-affirming care for all Oregonians.

Thank you,
Finn Gornick (he/him)