

Date: March 21, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Hazelle Lerum

RE: Support HB 2002

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Hazelle Lerum, and I am a public servant, a woman, and born-and-raised Oregonian.

Late today, after a long shift working in emergency preparedness and management, I received an email from a colleague about House Bill 2002. I was spurred into action by their testimony—and now, I am writing to express **support for House Bill 2002, Reproductive Health and Access to Care.**

As a frontline worker during the COVID-19 pandemic, I know the value of our healthcare workers. We **need** to protect our nurses and doctors. This bill will offer protections that will safeguard our healthcare workers from further trauma and burnout, during a time when we need to do **more** to ensure healthcare worker safety, not just for our women and LGBTQIA+ community, but also so that care is there when we need it for **everyone** in the community.

Additionally, as a bisexual woman who stands with the transgender community, it is **crucial** that we protect access to gender-affirming care. I have worked with countless organizations who provide services to gender-expansive youth, from shelters to psychiatric facilities and beyond. Gender-affirming care is **lifesaving**, and it is indispensable. Every single transgender person I have ever loved and held in my life has benefited from gender-affirming care when wanted, and I know from firsthand experience with people very dear to me that it has saved lives.

Lastly, as a cisgender woman, **please protect my right to not carry an unviable pregnancy to term.** I am lucky to say I have never had to have an abortion—but only because of Oregon's laws, which protect my rights to safe and effective contraception. You can read many stories of women who have been forced to carry dangerous, unviable, or otherwise traumatizing pregnancies to term, because of anti-abortion laws in other states and countries. They are powerful stories. And they are warning signs. Please, protect our families from the untold trauma that comes with abortion bans.

We are calling on you to codify these rights. If passed, this bill will provide immeasurable benefit to **all** Oregonians. If it fails, we will all suffer a terrible loss.

Please vote “yes” on HB 2002. Your constituents and future generations depend on it.

I sincerely thank you for your time.

With gratitude,
Hazelle Lerum