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**To: Senate Committee on Rules**  
**From: Sybil Hebb, Oregon Law Center**  
**Date: April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Re: Support for SJR 33**

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SJR 33, which would update Oregon's constitution to ensure that we all have equal rights regardless of our gender, sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Oregon Law Center (OLC) is a state-wide non-profit law firm whose mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. When our client communities are harmed by systemic oppression based on their identities, they are not able to achieve justice. Access to housing, health care and protection for civil rights are three of the top categories of need our client communities identified in statewide surveys. These were top needs for urban as well as rural survey respondents. SJR 33 will help to protect access to these fundamental needs across the state.

Everyone deserves to live a life free from discrimination or government interference based on gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Housing, employment, marriage and family planning, and health care – these ought never to be at risk due to a person's identity. Discrimination and lack of access to necessary health care, employment, or housing have a particular impact on people with low incomes and on vulnerable populations. In too many instances, discrimination and lack of access put lives at risk.

Passage of SJR 33 will ensure that Oregon voters have the right to choose whether to protect access to the care and services we need and ensure that we can all make deeply personal decisions free from government interference, including decisions regarding abortion, family planning, gender-affirming care, and same-gender marriage. Passage of the bill will provide the chance for voters to affirm that our state constitution should be clear that every Oregonian, regardless of sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, is afforded the same protections to live a life free of government actions that discriminate — from housing and employment to public accommodation to state services.

For these reasons, we urge your support. Thank you so much for your service to Oregonians.