

Submitter: Karen Rippberger  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure: SJR33

Dear Senators:

It is dehumanizing to have to ask other persons to vote for us to receive what is actually already ours as humans in Oregon--equality under the law.

It is a human right to be able to marry who you love. I married in California, so my marriage is protected by California law and the Respect for Marriage Act. I had already changed my gender on my Oregon driver's license to X when the Dobbs decision was handed down. I was about to send in my forms to have my California birth certificate changed, and decided to wait, preferring to have my gender in question than my marriage, and not knowing how this would affect my marriage. With the Respect for Marriage Act, I have now decided to go ahead and change my birth certificate.

But, if the Supreme Court rules that marriage laws are up to the states, and I am in a position to want to marry in Oregon, would I, neither man nor woman, be able to marry at all in my home state of Oregon? I love it here and don't want to head off to California to be able to marry. What about my friends and family? My lesbian nieces are considering tying the knot at a brother's house in Southern California when they'd rather do it in their hometown of Eugene. Will friends find themselves with annulled marriages and their legal status as spouses no longer honored? Will they have the added financial and mental stress burdens of having to redo wills to protect their rights? How is it equal to have to jump through hoops straight couples can only imagine? It is discrimination, pure and simple. It is second class citizenry. It is degrading, dehumanizing, humiliating, discriminatory. And it is unOregonian.

It is degrading for women to have to ask voters to give them what men have enjoyed without thought--bodily autonomy. And it is degrading to not be allowed for free one thing that gives women this autonomy--birth control. And when birth control fails or pregnancy is due to rape or incest or any other unfortunate circumstance, a woman should not have to carry an unwanted child. No Oregonian should find themselves pregnant without their express consent. It is only human.

It is unconscionable to deny medical care that allows a person to live their best life--and that includes gender affirming care. It is another act of degradation to deny this right to anyone; to say they can't know what they are like or who they are on so basic a level as gender, that takes hubris! And nobody should be allowed to exercise their hubris on another individual and curtail their rights. Nobody who hasn't walked in the shoes of being treated as a gender they aren't can know what it is like. And, while, I am not trans, I am nonbinary and have spent a lifetime not fitting into the roles that society has assigned me. I have spent a lifetime actually having to think out which public restroom is "mine," because I have never identified as either a man or woman (I use the women's room when their aren't universal access, and 3 times in my life,

when in unfamiliar territory, I've walked into the men's room and noticed nothing amiss until I saw the urinals. Over 60 years of practice, and I still can't depend on getting it right!)

Oregon can be the standard bearer, take a lead in not only full inclusion of all peoples, but full belonging--not having to draw a circle that brings them in, but to have no circle, only full belonging in this great Oregon society. I am proud of my state, proud to be an Oregonian, and proud to be the Chair of the DPO's Stonewall Caucus. While I am not writing on behalf of the Caucus, I'm proud to be their chair and I'm proud that the Stonewall Caucus Executive Committee voted unanimously this evening to send a resolution "Regarding SJR 33" to the DPO for consideration at our May 21 SCC meeting. Thank you so much for taking this bill up and making it possible for us to be able to reach the dream of full equality in our lifetimes!

In Pride,

Karen Rippberger