

Submitter: Carla KC Hanson  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure: SJR33

Dear members, this is the elongated version of my 1(ish) minute in-person testimony on 4/25/23

As a long time LGBT political activist, I was there in the 90's protecting Gay rights in the face of an onslaught of anti-gay measures in Oregon that specifically sought to dehumanize LGBT individuals and erase the concept of LGBT from our schools. Back then we won most of our battles statewide, but lost many local initiatives.

Broadly, the majority of Oregonians were willing to accept the concept of gay, but were more fearful on the homefront. Sadly, fears and prejudices are easily exploited. That fear and inherent misunderstanding of people unlike ourselves fuels and refuels radical and regressive movements meant to otherize and dismiss certain community members BECAUSE of their differences. THAT is the antithesis of equality.

While we have made steps forward, albeit awkwardly, we are currently seeing a hostile national regressive movement that is intended to put LGBT individuals back in our respective closets, and eliminate the concept of reproductive freedom in any form. From the Supreme Court of the US to Florida, to every legislature in the nation, powerful regressives are wielding their power with ferocity that exceeds what we saw in the 90's in Oregon.

And I want to be very clear here: the 90's were both exhilarating and painful. While the successes in beating back Ballot Measure 9, 13, and 9 again in 2000 were wonderful wins for our community, the prejudice and hate we saw on the campaign trail were real, and for me it played into all my own self doubt and self-hate I grew up with as a kid who was just different.

That pain never goes away, but it also propels me to continue the fight for full equality. Most critically, it inspires me to work as an ally to folks that are unlike me - but like me, are also advocates for equal and fair treatment under the law.

SJR 33 exists because it is an effort of allies, because people of different lives and lifestyles have come together in the recognition that there are certain basic rights that all deserve.

In the 90's, "Straight but not Narrow" was the hottest selling button on the campaign trail. Our straight allies, who may have not understood us queer folks at all, were nonetheless both enthusiastic and essential as we fought for our equal rights.

Today, again, collaboration is critical, and in advocating with and for people we don't understand we are fighting for the universal greater good of equality... for ourselves, for our allies and for all Oregonians

Equality IS hard... but it IS essential.

Please move this legislation forward.