



Office of the Senate President

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp and Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Rob Wagner, Senate President and senator representing District 19, which includes Lake Oswego, West Linn, Tualatin, Southwest Portland, Rivergrove, and Durham.

Many of you might not know this but I began my career in Oregon fighting against the extremely homophobic, anti-LGBTQ ballot measures of the 1990s and early 2000s. These included, Ballot Measure 36, which almost two decades ago inserted language into our state constitution defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

The Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization* put millions of Americans' civil rights at risk. We are now seeing the result of that decision. I am not the first to say this, but these these are truly scary times for the values of freedom and equality across the US. It seems that every day, we are hearing of another law being passed that criminalizes, penalizes, or restricts abortion, gender affirming care, and LGBTQ rights.

We are lucky to live in a state where we have already taken great strides in protecting women and our LGBTQ community, and there is always more work to be done. I am very excited and honored to be here today to take this step toward correct the wrongs of the past and affirm to Oregonians that we will protect their rights.

SJR 33 will give voters the opportunity to not only remove Ballot Measure 36 language from our constitution but amend our ERA to affirmatively state that Oregonians value equality under the law and the freedom to make our own deeply personal decisions about our health, our lives, and our futures.

The right to abortion, the right to marry who we love, and the right live a full life as a transgender person in Oregon – free from government interference – are fundamental rights. If voters approve SJR 33, the values enshrined in our constitution will protect our citizens and serve as a beacon of hope for millions across the country.

I want to conclude by elevating a message I received from my daughter Mia, and I have also submitted her letter as testimony for your committee's record.

*"2023 is a historic year for women and the LGBT+ community, but not historic in progress. By March 2023, legislators around the United States had already introduced more than anti-LGTQ+ 300 bills. Less than a year ago the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. In a little over 10 months, over a quarter of the United States no longer enshrines the right to safe, legal abortions. As a woman and a queer Oregonian, it seems as if I wake up every single day to read that my legal rights and more importantly, my identity and the identity of others like me, are increasingly jeopardized around my country.*

*When the federal right to abortion was struck down, I was fearful for women and others who can bear children in our country. I was fearful when I read language from Supreme Court justices signaling a*



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*threat to my right to be with the woman I love. That being said, those threats from the federal level made me all the more proud of the state I hail from. Oregon today is seen as a beacon of willingness-willingness to stand up to the tyranny of those in this country that wish to curtail progress. It's crucial that the legislators and people of Oregon take the steps to ensure that the rights of all Oregonians are codified into our state's highest form of law." – Mia Cremona*

Colleagues, I urge your support for SJR 33 and this foundational work that helps safeguard freedom and equal rights in our great state.

Sincerely,

Rob Wagner  
State Senate, District 19  
Senate President