

Thank you Chair Lieber and members of the committee.

My name is Evelyn Kocher and I use she/her pronouns. I am a sixth-generation Oregonian and a proud trans woman and I'm here in support of SJR 33.

I've known that I was a girl since I knew what gender was. After struggling with my identity for over 20 years, I was only able to come out after confronting a lot of internalized hatred and queerphobia and after establishing my complete financial independence from my family, who is no longer in my life. I wish that I had had a choice in my identity—trans folks are the target of culture wars throughout the country and the world and have lower life expectancies, average incomes, and rates of safety than our cis counterparts, and if I had been able to be cis, then maybe I could have salvaged a relationship with my family.

Since coming out, I have spent over \$30,000 on my treatment without any help from insurance. I have worked 70 hours or more a week at three jobs for the last two years to come close to being able to afford to be the person I am today. I helped write HB 2002, a gender affirming care bill, two years ago, and during that time, I have not been able to see a single Oregon surgeon for a consultation for further care.

I realize that I am so incredibly lucky to have had the stability, whether that be financially, mentally, or socially, to spend that money on my care, but I don't want to be one of the lucky ones anymore. With the rise in anti-trans and anti-queer laws around the country preventing our access to medical care, labeling our identities as profane and indecent, and criminalizing our existence in public, it is incredibly significant that Oregon is instead trying to protect my rights in our state constitution.

By simply existing as a trans woman of color, I am many times more likely to be assaulted, killed, or die by suicide than cis people of the same background. This resolution would extend the state's protection to people like me and show me that, despite an identity that we did not choose, we are valued the same as our cis counterparts. It would be a huge step towards ensuring my and my community's safety and would show our trans siblings that they—that WE—belong and are truly valued in this state.

For these reasons and for many more, I urge you to vote YES on SJR 33.

Thank you,
Evelyn Kocher