

Submitter: Lisa Watson
On Behalf Of: HR3
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HR3

Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Munoz, Vice Chair Elmer, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Lisa Watson and I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, a life long Oregonian, and an enthusiastic supporter and appreciative member of the Drag fan community of Oregon.

I am writing to ask for your support of HB 3, celebrating the important and life-saving history of Black Drag in Oregon.

I am a cis-gender Native woman who has served many roles in Oregon as a board member, volunteer, and staff member serving the LGBTQIA2S+ community (including Q-Center, Basic Rights Oregon, Cascade AIDS Project, Our House of Portland, SMYRC, the Oregon Health Policy Board and others).

My husband and I count many Black Drag performers as our most treasured friends in our beloved community.

I have seen first hand the life-saving and fulfilling role that Black Drag performers in Oregon have played in ensuring that queer, trans, non-binary, and other drag artists of color feel safe, welcomed, and celebrated, and as IMPACTFUL in our community as they can be. Black Drag performers are, in my opinion, the most generous and giving members of the community that I get the joy of witnessing in my daily life.

Not only do our Black Drag performers create safety and community for other drag performers, I see these professionals as examples of generosity, kindness, creativity, and open heartedness in how they show up in their daily lives and their communities.

Too often, young people who are questioning their identity, or struggling to fit in, end up in mental health crises that may result in self harm, suicide, estrangement, homelessness, and violence. I have seen time and time again, members of the Black Drag community embracing young people in crisis, creating community, becoming chosen family, and welcoming these young people into a place of belonging, love, and creativity. They are quite literally saving young lives.

Black Drag in Oregon is foundational to the thriving future of our queer youth. Black Drag performers are dedicated to service in their communities and are among the strongest leaders in philanthropy and fundraising support for queer youth and other community members in need.

Not to mention the sheer joy that Drag performers provide in our most challenging times!

Oregon is blessed to include Black Drag performers as our neighbors, friends, and mentors to our youth.

Drag community saves lives. I am grateful to spend any time I can among our Drag leaders and I respectfully ask for your support of House Resolution 3. Our Black Drag performers deserve this acknowledgement, recognition and appreciation.

By supporting this resolution, you can help save Young Black Lives, too.

Please support House Resolution 3 and be on the right side of Oregon History.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to all Oregonians.