

Testimony from:

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Pride Northwest Inc

**In Support of SB 939: Relating to security for nonprofit organizations;  
declaring an emergency**

**2/27/2025**

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. My name is Debra Porta, and I serve as the Executive Director of Pride Northwest, a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to uplifting and supporting the LGBTQIA2S+ community across Oregon. I am here today in support of Senate Bill 939. I urge you to allocate funding to ensure that LGBTQIA2S+ organizations, events, and community spaces have access to the security resources necessary to protect our community from the increasing threats of violence and harassment.

The reality we face today is that hate-fueled rhetoric and actions against LGBTQIA2S+ people are not just rising—they are escalating in severity and coordination. We have seen direct threats against Pride events, drag performances, LGBTQIA2S+ community centers, and even businesses that openly support us. In the last year alone, numerous cities across the country have had to cancel or heavily modify events due to safety concerns. Here in Oregon, our own Pride celebrations and community spaces have been targeted and had to divert already scarce resources toward security—resources that should be used to support and uplift our community instead of defending against violence. Pride Northwest spends tens of thousands of dollars each year to ensure that the Portland Pride Waterfront Festival and Parade, a two-day event that generates almost \$12 million in economic

impact, is safe for everyone who wishes to attend and participate. In 2024, there were 25 known Pride celebrations across the state of Oregon. Our ability to hold safe events matters, not only to our community, but to our state's economy as well.

LGBTQIA2S+ people, particularly trans and nonbinary individuals, are facing targeted harassment in public spaces, and organizations like mine are on the front lines of ensuring that our communities have safe places to gather, celebrate, and seek support. Yet, we cannot do this alone. The increased need for security personnel, protective measures, and emergency preparedness planning comes at a high cost, one that many community organizations cannot afford on their own.

In our current times, state-based funding for security grants and emergency preparedness for LGBTQIA2S+ organizations and events is critical and necessary. Every community deserves the right to assemble and celebrate without fear. Every nonprofit serving vulnerable populations deserves to do so without becoming a target. Supporting this funding is a clear and necessary step to ensure that LGBTQIA2S+ people, and all people, in Oregon can live freely and safely.

I urge you to recognize the urgent need for these resources and take action to protect our community. Thank you for your time and consideration.