

Good evening Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek, Vice Chairs Boshart-Davis and Starr, and members of the committee,

My name is Cassie Wilson and I'm speaking in opposition of HB 2683 - and this testimony is on behalf of myself, not my employer. While I know we have a lot to get to tonight, I hope you will hear my full testimony as someone part of a community who would be directly impacted by this legislation. It's about 3 minutes long.

I've been disabled my entire life. When I saw this bill and its Senate counterpart filed I got a sinking feeling in my gut.

On the surface, I could understand why someone may want the things this bill does, but the potential for negative impacts from this bill far outweigh any potential good it may do.

Also, I'd like to note that it appears the Chief Sponsor of this bill did not do the same outreach that the Chief Sponsor in the Senate did. We thought the bill was dead based on community feedback and not moving, and were shocked to see the House version put up for a hearing without input from key stakeholders and with very little public notice. But here we are so I will now list all of the ways this would be harmful.

- It treats a symptom, not the root issue. Treating the root issue would mean training police to better prepare to interact with people who have communications challenges and being able to recognize when they encounter them.
- Putting this information on your identification for one purpose would involuntarily disclose your disability status every time you have to show ID, including when you're starting a new job and therefore lose your employee rights of nondisclosure as a disabled person.
- Voluntary programs are a slippery slope to being required.

- A quick look into the news now and history not long ago, reminds us of all of the ways identification of protected class status on paperwork has been used to further marginalize people or literally justify killing us. So forgive me if under the current federal administration, the thought of a bill like this makes me sick.
- Non-disabled people generally have a really difficult time understanding the differences between different disabled people and types of disabilities and accommodations already, so this would only further add to the confusion - for example, “Well if you have communication challenges, why don’t you have it on your card?” even though it’s voluntary. It creates cultural expectations to opt-in if you’re impacted despite having the right not to do so. It’s the same as when people ask me where my caregiver is. Not every disabled person has the same needs.
- I can’t imagine police officers would feel good about you digging around to pull out your ID card to show them that you can’t communicate when they have no idea what you’re digging around for because you can’t communicate that. This could put people at even more risk for the police violence that does unfortunately disproportionately affect the people this bill is trying to protect.
- Not everyone who has communication challenges necessarily has access to doctors, diagnoses, and protection under the ADA, meaning there is not equal access to opting in to something like this.
- This bill has no discrimination protections written into it, and even if it did, it would be on the disabled person to enforce them. We spend so much of our lives being discriminated against that we straight up do not have the time and energy to report every single way we’re discriminated against, so the chances of accountability and justice for misuse or mistreatment are slim.

While there absolutely is work to be done on protecting disabled people with communication challenges from discrimination, this bill does not actually address that problem.

I urge you to keep all disabled Oregonians safe and kill this bill.