



February 3, 2021

Dear Members of the Oregon Senate Education Committee:

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 52. As a life-long educator, first as a high school teacher, and now as a teacher educator, I have worked with hundreds of teachers and visited dozens of schools, and it crystal clear to me the need for systemic support, including teacher professional development, to make schools places where LGBTQ2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer, and/or Two-Spirit) students not only survive, but thrive.

Because of the diligent research work of the Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition, under the direction of Dr. Julie Heffernan and Dr. Tina Gutierrez-Schmich, we benefit from having a clear picture of the harmful school experiences LGBTQ2S+ students experience in Oregon. Individual acts of bias, assault and harassment are a regular threat for gender minority students, impacting their mental health and well-being. Further, the research also reveals that individual biases shape the policies and practices in schools that underlie these students' adverse experiences. Clearly, protecting all students from harassment and disrupting clear patterns of institutional discrimination must be an important priority for Oregon's schools.

On a more personal note, I am a parent of three children, one of whom is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade LGBTQ2S+ student. I wonder – and worry, given the data reported above – about the type of school experiences my child will have in Oregon public schools. I am hopeful that if passed, this legislation will be an important step in creating conditions for safe, affirming, and inclusive schools for my child and all LGBTQ2S+ students and teachers. Our children deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

Joanna Goode  
Sommerville Knight Professor of Education

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