

To: House Healthcare Committee
From: Gigi Cassel
Date: February 25, 2017
RE: Vote YES on HB 2673

Chair Mitch Greenlick and House Healthcare Committee Members:

I'm writing to ask for you to improve the lives of transgender Oregonians by voting yes on HB 2673.

I started transitioning in 2012 and successfully changed my name and gender on my driver license around February 2014. As someone living on a very fixed income—I receive SSI and SSD—I could not have afforded this process without the help of outside in.

The process began by setting up an appointment to see the judge for the hearing. I had to provide my old name, my new name, and an explanation of why I wanted to change my name. I then had to post a public notice with this information, as well as my home address and phone number, on a public wall in the court house for a month.

Having my personal contact information posted in the Multnomah County Courthouse was scary and anxiety-inducing for me. My stress levels were extremely high that month. The day of my hearing was equally nerve-racking and stressful. I had just started to live publicly as my true self, though I hadn't gone through any medical procedures, so I was afraid that the judge would deny my request.

When it was my turn to see the judge, my old name was shouted in a room full of strangers. Again, I had only just begun to feel comfortable living as my true self in public. To be reminded, in a very public way, of this name that doesn't reflect who I am, and to have no choice but to answer to that name, was embarrassing and humiliating.

While I am happy that I could change my name and ID, the process was deeply humiliating and demoralizing for me. Transgender people want to be treated with the same dignity and respect as everyone else. To engage in this very public process where we're referred to by a name that for many of us is deeply painful; where our public information is available for all to see, simply so we can be the person we already know we are, is immensely demoralizing.

I urge you to support HB 2673 so that transgender Oregonians can have the documents they need to live their lives without fear.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gigi Cassel
Portland, OR