



youth empowered • equal rights • social change

February 25, 2017

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee,

**Lotus Rising Project urges your support for HB 2673.**

Transgender and gender non-conforming Oregonians face undue disadvantages in accessing proper identity documents. We urge you not to look the other way. We are Lotus Rising Project, a youth initiated, compassion-based, non-profit organization that works on behalf of LGBTQ+ youth in Southern Oregon.

Transgender individuals are part of the community we serve. They face many obstacles, one of which is updating and paying for identity documents such as birth certificates, gender markers on state identification, and social security cards. This obstacle is a critical health equity issue that impact the overall health and economic security of transgender Oregonians. As Amiko-Gabriel Blue, a Jackson County resident and Lotus Rising Project board member shares:

“There are five main barriers I faced when seeking to update my own identity records, including my name and gender marker: Cost, privacy and safety, decentralization, and transportation. The cost of just the name change in Jackson County is \$111. For someone who lives on \$733 a month, I could not shoulder this cost on my own. I had to reach out to community members for help. People who don't have insurance would have also had to shoulder the cost of obtaining therapy, as a therapist's letter in support of these changes is also a requirement. Next was safety. Before I could see a judge, I had to post my intention for a name and gender change on the public bulletin board for 14 days. Anyone could have seen my post and tracked me down. This is a real concern. Many transgender people are murdered each year in the United States, specifically because they are transgender. And before and after all of this was the challenge of navigating a decentralized system. I had to track down how and where to go for each individual piece: Court permission to change my documents, the DMV paperwork for my ID, my social security card, and my birth certificate. Included in all of that is the need for transportation. I am disabled and unable to drive making transportation to and from each of these non-centralized locations a real barrier.”

The economic and social hardships involved in obtaining name and gender identity confirming documents compromise the immediate and long-term health, safety, and economic security of trans and gender non-conforming community members. HB 2673 is an important step toward fulfilling goal one of the Oregon Department of Human Services for transgender Oregonians, to be safe and living as independently as possible.

**With these things in mind, Lotus Rising Project strongly urges the Committee to support HB 2673.**

With sincerity,  
Lotus Rising Project