



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Legislative Director
In Support of HB 2261
House Committee on Education
February 27, 2017**

Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Oregon¹ urges this committee to support HB 2261, which will allow the Youth Development Council to coordinate statewide services to youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning.

The ACLU of Oregon has a long history of supporting the LGBTQ community. Through litigation, lobbying, public education, and organizing, we seek to create a just society for all LGBTQ people and work to build a country where our communities can live openly without discrimination and enjoy equal rights, personal autonomy, and freedom of expression and association.

Discrimination, harassment, and even physical violence continue to play far too large a role in the lives of LGBTQ students. LGBTQ youth also face a multitude of additional challenges: higher risk of suicide, higher rates of homelessness, and increased risk of substance use and entanglement with the juvenile justice system. Many LGBTQ youth also experience rejection from family members and resulting entry into the foster care system.

As OYDC has recognized, our systems are not yet adequately serving LGBTQ youth and all of these challenges they face in Oregon. There is much work to do.

Fortunately, the Oregon Youth Development Council (OYDC) is engaging in this work, and HB 2261 will expand on OYDC's ability to provide support to LGBTQ youth. We believe this work by OYDC and the passage of HB 2261 is crucial to ensuring that LGBTQ youth can thrive and grow in Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns.

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights. We have more than 28,000 members across the State of Oregon, and that number is growing as we speak.