



TO: The Oregon House Committee on Education  
FR: Basic Rights Oregon  
DA: March 8, 2017  
RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2649

Chair Doherty and members of the committee,

Basic Rights Oregon urges your support for HB 2649, a bill that would take another step in ending bullying and harassment for all Oregon students.

Basic Rights Oregon works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Oregonians experience equality. The need for LGBTQ youth justice is immense. The 2015 US Transgender Survey, the largest survey examining the experiences of transgender people in the United States with more than 27,000 respondents, recently came out with some sobering statistics:

- More than three quarters of those who were out or perceived as transgender at some point between Kindergarten and Grade 12 experienced mistreatment, such as being verbally harassed, prohibited from dressing according to their gender identity, disciplined more harshly, or physically or sexually assaulted because people thought they were transgender.
- More than half of those who were out or perceived as transgender in K-12 were verbally harassed, nearly one-quarter (24%) were physically attacked, and 13% were sexually assaulted in K-12 because of being transgender.
- Seventeen percent (17%) faced such severe mistreatment as a transgender person that they left a K-12 school.

Fortunately, in Oregon we are taking steps to address barriers for transgender youth. In 2009, the legislature passed the Safe Schools Act which established statewide adoption of anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies. In 2016, the Oregon Department of Education released comprehensive guidelines to protect and affirm transgender students in our public schools. HB 2649 builds on this work and takes one more step in ensuring that Oregon schools are safe for all kids.

We appreciate you time and consideration.

Thank you,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "Nancy Haque" and the second is "Amy Herzfeld-Copple".

Nancy Haque & Amy Herzfeld-Copple  
*Co-Executive Directors*