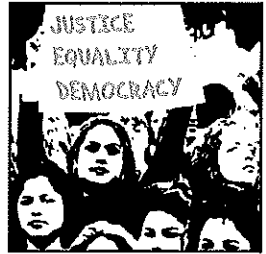


March 15, 2017

Chair Greenlick, Co-Chairs and Members of the House Health Care Committee:



On behalf of the Western States Center, we respectfully request your support for the Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391). The Reproductive Health Equity Act of 2017 establishes coverage for the full spectrum of reproductive health services including family planning, abortion, and postpartum care for all Oregonians regardless of income, citizenship status, gender identity or type of insurance.


The decision about whether and when to become a parent is one of the most important decisions that we all face, and it's a decision with important implications for our families, our economic security, and our futures. Restrictions on reproductive health care can have profoundly harmful effects on the well-being of Oregonians, particularly for those who already face significant barriers to receiving care. Unfortunately, such restrictions have disproportionate impact on low-income communities, transgender and queer folks, and communities of color.

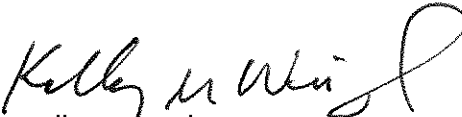
Western States Center connects and builds the power of community organizations to challenge and transform individuals, organizations and systems to achieve racial, gender and economic justice. We urge your support of HB 3391 because it ensures that:

- 48,000 women and people who can become pregnant living in Oregon, who are categorically excluded due to their citizenship status, have access to vital reproductive health services. These Oregonians are ineligible for Medicaid, and unable to access insurance on the Exchange, leaving them without coverage and care during the postpartum period, a pivotal time for both parent and baby.
- No Oregonian is denied coverage because of who they are. Transgender and gender nonconforming Oregonians need access to services often categorized as "women's health care," including gender-specific cancer screenings. However, procedural barriers hinder access to this necessary and lifesaving care.
- One's access to critical reproductive health services is not hinged on one's financial resources. When the cost of care must first come out of a high deductible, these services can be unaffordable and inaccessible for many. This is particularly problematic for women seeking abortion — a time-sensitive and critical service that one in three women access by the time they are 45.

We believe that all Oregonians need access to the full spectrum of reproductive health coverage for all families to thrive, for a stronger economy, and for a healthier state. We hope that you will join us in support of the Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391).

Sincerely,


Amy Casso
Gender Justice Program Director
Western States Center


Kelley Weigel
Executive Director
Western States Center