

TO: Senate Judiciary Committee
FROM: Cameron Mathews
RE: Vote YES on HB 2673A
DATE: May 3, 2017

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee:

I am writing to ask you to support HB 2673A.

As a transgender man, I have a deep sense of privilege and relief to be able to call Oregon my home. As I watch states across the country fight to eliminate protections for their transgender citizens and reduce them to stereotypes based on fear and misunderstanding, I feel extreme pride to live and work in a progressive state that values and works to protect the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all people.

Yet despite such positive sentiments, the process to obtain official documentation reflecting an accurate name and gender marker is unnecessarily burdensome for transgender Oregonians. As a highly educated transgender man with deep roots in community activism and access to financial, social, and legal resources, I still had significant difficulty navigating the conflicting, lengthy, and expensive processes to update my official documents. Five years later, I have still not been able to update all documents. Imagining the experience of folks with less access and support brings about a sense of deep disappointment and shame that such an amazing state would allow unnecessary barriers to promote fear and uncertainty and prevent or deter any person from obtaining documents that reflect who they truly are. This is a matter of access and safety, and Oregon is better than this.

HB 2673A will ensure that transgender Oregonians have access to a safe, affordable, and streamlined process to obtain accurate official documentation. It will assure transgender Oregonians can live authentically and without fear, and are proud to call Oregon home.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote yes on HB 2673A.

Cameron Mathews
North Portland