

TO: Senate Judiciary Committee
FROM: Carlee Roberts, Transgender Woman
DATE: May 3, 2017
RE: Vote YES on HB 2673A

Chair Prozanski and Members of Committee:

My name is Carlee Roberts and I am here to share my story in support of HB 2673A, a bill to help transgender Oregonians. I publicly came out as transgender about two years ago. I now live as my authentic self and have spent countless amounts of time and energy to educate the people in my life on why their support is so crucial to my success and wellbeing. But I still face many challenges, including having inaccurate identity documentation.

Because I lack IDs that match my gender and name, I endure fear and shame in many situations that others take for granted. Flying is the worst. Every time I fly, I'm always randomly searched. When I present my ID, I can see the questioning look on the TSA agent's face when they look at my ID, look at me, and look at my ID again. They call me "Sir," which is not how I identify. It scares me because it outs me as transgender to everyone around me, and makes me feel unsafe. I feel similarly when I go to the doctor. I've had a persistent cough for two weeks—I delayed going to the doctor because I know that the receptionist is going to call out the name on my ID, again outing me to everyone in the waiting room and exposing me to potential danger.

Whenever I look at my ID, or even worse, show it to someone else, I am reminded that I'm different, that I am I'm not a complete person. It's always been in the back of my mind, the idea of changing my ID, but the process and costs were too much. I decided to finally change my identification documents in 2015 after I was assaulted sexually by a person after they learned that I'm transgender. I didn't feel I could report it to the authorities because the fear of being scrutinized or blamed for the assault —experiences that my trans friends have encountered. It paralyzed me.

I desperately want to feel whole again—feel normal, and began the process, which is overwhelming. First, the cost is extremely high, especially for someone like me who works part time. Even if I could afford the filing fees, the process is so complicated and confusing that the only thing I could think of was to find an attorney who could do all the paperwork on my behalf, but their cost was prohibitive. Finally, I was reluctant because there is an archaic process of having to publicly post both the notice to change and the decision afterwards for roughly a month. This scares me the most. The idea that my decision to finally become the person I've always known myself to be, a decision that is so intimate and private, would be a matter of public knowledge kept me from actively pursuing it.

Finally, after working on the process for more than a year, I was approached by an attorney who was willing to work with me pro bono. I still must pay filing fees of more than \$200, but fortunately, on March 17, I will be in court to finally align my documentation with the real me.

Passing this bill would make an immense difference to so many transgender people—reducing the costs and process so it's more accessible, and making it more private to reduce risk of harassment or violence. HB 2673A would allow so many people, people who otherwise may never have the chance, the ability to take this huge step in becoming their authentic self. Thank you, members of the committee for the opportunity to share my story. I urge you to support HB 2673A.

Carlee Roberts
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