

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Lisa Rackner
Re: Support for HB 2673A
Date: May 3, 2017

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee,

My name is Lisa Rackner and I am a partner at McDowell Rackner & Gibson, a law firm in Portland, Oregon, specializing in energy policy work. I am also a volunteer lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union and Basic Rights Oregon. I am here today to testify personally in support of HB 2673A.

During this last year, I have represented several transgender clients in their efforts to update their names and gender markers in the Oregon courts under existing state law and court processes. I have done this work on a pro bono basis, because most transgender clients do not have the income to pay attorney fees—or in many cases even court fees. There are two aspects of this work that have struck me most deeply.

First, this process is more than a simple legality for my clients. On the contrary, having their legal gender and name affirm their identity is fundamental to my clients' emotional and psychological well-being. It is a sign that they are acknowledged and accepted for who they truly know themselves to be. In addition, having identification documents that match my clients' presentation also reduces the likelihood that they will experience ridicule or violence—both of which are far too common for transgender community members.

Second, the current court process is unnecessarily complex and invasive. The process requires my clients to fill out a myriad of forms and publicly post their requests and orders for a gender marker change—something that is simply not safe in some circumstances, or for some specific clients. In addition, some courts feel the need to ask invasive personal and medical questions, often in open court, which any person would find humiliating.

HB 2673A will provide my clients with a more efficient, private and safe process by which they can obtain a name and gender marker that are appropriate and so critically important to them. I ask for your support in passing this important bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lisa Rackner