



## The Reynolds Law Firm, PC

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Senate Judiciary Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2673A

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to support the HB 2673A. I am an attorney in Corvallis who has assisted many transgender Oregonians in obtaining legal name and gender designation changes through the circuit court.

There is nothing new about people who are transgender. They have always been part of our families and communities. What is different is that we are finally recognizing the impact that archaic laws have on the lives of real people who deserve to be seen and recognized for who they are. Allowing this change in the legal system is a step towards ending the discrimination that Oregonians face when they seek to change their gender designation.

The current system is antiquated and presents unnecessary barriers designed for a different era. The process currently requires public posting of notices on the wall at the courthouse before and after a judicial hearing that is open to the public. In Benton County where I practice, it requires a minimum of three visits in person to the courthouse and there is a \$111.00 filing fee. No one can predict what will happen at the hearing because any judge, including pro temp judges, may be assigned to the hearing. Judges and court staff sometimes lack training or background in the issue of gender designations, which can result in unnecessary and inappropriate comments or even inquiries into private details about the petitioner's transition. Stories about these incidents are rampant throughout the trans community and present a barrier for people who might otherwise utilize the court system because they do not want to experience discrimination or an invasion of their privacy.

Because the current process is so onerous, many Oregonians are prevented from accessing the legal process that is theoretically available to them. Sixty-eight percent of people who are

transgender in the United States live without ID that matches their gender identity and nearly one-third of people who are transgender who have had to show an ID that did not match their gender presentation were verbally harassed, denied benefits or service, asked to leave, or assaulted according to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. This is consistent with my experience over the past 20 years of assisting transgender and gender-non-conforming clients navigate the legal system and assert their rights.

I support HB 2673A as written. Having an affordable, administrative process that will allow everyone to have accurate IDs that match their gender presentation is an important step towards equality. I particularly support the policy that allows continued access the court process for those that choose this route (i.e. people born in other states) while also allowing those born in Oregon a streamlined administrative process.

In Benton County, where I practice law, many people choose not to use the court system, either because of the cost or because of the public posting and hearing requirements. Other people are unable to navigate the process on their own, nor do they have funds available to hire an attorney to represent them. While some communities like ours have pro bono resources available, this is not true statewide.

Right now, many people who are transgender are put at risk of harassment or hate crimes when they are asked to show their ID because their appearance does not match their official gender designation. At the bank, the airport, when they use a credit card, if they get pulled over for speeding, everyday interactions that I take for granted force them to disclose private information to strangers, some of whom are the very people who will discriminate against them or even commit hate crimes. One simple way we can address this problem is by streamlining the gender designation change process in the manner set forth in HB 2673A.

Thank you for your service to the State of Oregon and for your important work on this issue.

Sincerely,

  
Lorena Reynolds  
Attorney at Law

LR/bh