



TO: Senate Workforce Committee
FROM: Nancy Haque & Amy Herzfeld-Copple, Basic Rights Oregon
DATE: May 15, 2017
RE: Vote YES on HB 3060A

Chair Taylor and Members of Committee:

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, we ask for your support of HB 3060A, Preventing Discrimination Through Public Contracting. Basic Rights Oregon works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Oregonians experience equality. This legislation is a necessary step in the right direction to ensure that all Oregonians can live free from discrimination.

During the last two decades, we've made tremendous progress around LGBTQ equality. We've built a broad coalition of supporters and elected legislators who believe in fairness and equality. Despite this work, we know Oregonians continue to experience discrimination, particularly transgender individuals in health care and employment. For those unfamiliar, transgender is the term to describe a person whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Data from the 2015 US Trans Survey reveals significant challenges for transgender individuals:

- Nearly one-third of transgender people live in poverty, compared to 14 percent in the U.S. population. A major contributor is their unemployment rate—it is three times higher than the unemployment rate in the U.S. population.
- One in four transgender people reported experiencing a problem in the past year with their insurance related to being transgender, such as being denied coverage for life-saving and routine care because they were transgender.

Every Oregonian deserves to work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. The Oregon Legislature has taken steps to ensure that all Oregonians, regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability are treated equally under the law. However, Oregon's contracting and procurement statutes have not been updated to reflect these values. And despite our best efforts to end discrimination with the passage of the Oregon Equality Act in 2007, we know discrimination continues and data from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in fact suggest instances of discrimination are on the rise.

HB 3060A will help level the playing field and reduce discrimination in the workplace. The bill would require prospective contractors seeking contracts worth more than \$150,000 to

certify that they have policies and practices that prohibit sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination. This includes a prohibition on denying benefits to an employee or their dependent based solely on their gender identity, if the employer provides benefits. Oregon's insurance regulators already direct carriers to provide health care services on an equal basis to all Oregonians regardless of gender identity. However, not all companies need to comply with this direction because their insurance is based out of state or the company is self-insured.

HB 3060A simply states that, if you are doing significant business with the State of Oregon, we expect you to abide by Oregon's values of equality and nondiscrimination, as already articulated by Oregon's insurance regulating agency. More broadly speaking, by requiring employers that seek to obtain contracts from the State of Oregon to certify they have taken reasonable steps to prevent workplace discrimination, we help protect Oregon workers and send a clear message that Oregon stands for equality and fair treatment.

Thank you for the opportunity to support HB 3060A, which will prevent discrimination through public contracting.

Thank you,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Nancy Haque' and the signature on the right is 'Amy Herzfeld-Copple'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Haque & Amy Herzfeld-Copple
Co-Executive Directors