



March 18, 2020

Co-Chairs Roblan and Holvey and Members of the Committee,

Basic Rights Oregon is the state's chief advocacy, education and political organization dedicated to ending discrimination against LGBTQ individuals.

As the coronavirus spreads exponentially the impacts will touch all of us. We are grateful for the leadership of Governor Brown and local leaders for taking immediate action through emergency declarations and preventative measures to help curb the growth of this pandemic to save lives.

As our communities are rapidly trying to adjust to this outbreak and the measures necessary to slow the spread of the virus we must address the emerging needs and impacts to our economic security and ability to care for our families now to avoid long term or permanent harm.

And while all communities in Oregon will be impacted by this global pandemic, our community is impacted in very specific ways. In general, LGBTQ community members have a difficult time accessing affirming healthcare. Now, with many health care systems limiting surgeries and appointments, the situation is even more difficult and we are concerned for our community's ability to access care.

Additionally, LGBTQ community members experience high rates of houselessness and housing instability. With many folks losing their jobs or being put on temporary furloughs, the ability to pay rent and utilities is becoming almost impossible.

As you consider the steps to take to address this crisis, please keep in mind ways to lift up each of our communities, in addition to the policy document submitted by the worker advocates today.

Specifically, ensuring that all state responses are distributed equitably and are accessible to underserved communities, including Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, people with disabilities, elders, rural communities and others.

Also, ensure that healthcare facilities and testing sites are sited to reach underserved communities, with access to safe transportation provided. Plus, by passing an emergency rent forgiveness order for all workers impacted by the outbreak, as well as placing a statewide moratorium on evictions, we can ensure that our community members stay safe and housed during this difficult time.

Thank you for your consideration. Basic Rights Oregon looks forward to continuing to work with you on these policy solutions to serve our communities.

Best,

Nancy Haque

Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon