



Date: February 11, 2019

To: Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, Members of the Senate Committee on Workforce

From: Nancy Haque, Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon

RE: Basic Rights Oregon Support for SB 726, The Oregon Workplace Fairness Act

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp and members of the Senate Workforce Committee:

Basic Rights Oregon works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Oregonians experience equality with a focus on transgender and racial justice.

Basic Rights Oregon supports SB 726 which would better protect workers who have faced discrimination in the workplace. We know that current laws don't go far enough to protect harassment victims at work and we support SB 726 because LGBTQ-identified workers are at heightened risk of harassment in the workplace.

According to a report by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 35% of LGB-identified people who reported being "open" at work reported harassment in the workplace¹. Additionally, 58% of LGBTQ workers reported hearing derogatory comments about their sexual orientation and gender identity².

Transgender workers reported experiencing particularly high rates of harassment, with 50% of workers reporting some form of sexual harassment³, 41% reporting being asked unwelcome questions about their transgender or surgical status, and 45% reported being referred to by the wrong pronouns "repeatedly and on purpose" at work⁴.

These are extremely high rates of harassment which underscore the need for stronger protections for LGBTQ workers. By having BOLI create standards and procedures for employers and employees regarding sexual harassment, we will begin to create an environment where all workers in Oregon, no matter how they identify, can work with dignity and respect.

Basic Rights Oregon respectfully requests the committee to support SB 726 and commends Sen. Taylor and the committee for giving this legislation due consideration in service to your constituencies and Oregonians from across the state. Furthermore, Basic Rights Oregon commends Vice-Chair Knopp for his leadership on this issue. This bill is critical to the workplace safety of all Oregonians and crucial for LGBTQ workers.

Thank you,

Nancy Haque
Executive Director
Basic Rights Oregon

¹ https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf

² https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf

³ https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf

⁴ https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf