



DA: March 11, 2019

TO: Senate Committee on Health Care

FR: Cascade AIDS Project, Prism Health

RE: In support of Senate Bill 142-1

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Peter Parisot and I am the Deputy Executive Director of the Cascade AIDS Project, Oregon's largest and oldest AIDS Service organization, and Prism Health. We have been providing services to individuals living with or affected by HIV for 35 years. Prism Health is our LGBTQ+ focused primary care clinic that provides the community with the safe and affirming health care that they need and deserve. Collectively our mission is to support and empower all people with or affected by HIV, reduce stigma, and provide the LGBTQ+ community with compassionate healthcare.

People living with HIV often experience overlapping stigmas, including the still prevalent historical stigma associated with HIV, sexual orientation or gender identity, race or ethnicity, poverty or homelessness, and mental health conditions.

While the quality of life has improved enormously for people with HIV in the past 30 years, many of the same social and psychological barriers remain. HIV prevention is also dramatically hindered by stigma. Studies have linked stigma to increased risk, non-disclosure, and avoidance of health services.¹

In Washington, the state health department has embarked on a several years long initiative to end HIV/AIDS in the state. As a part of that work, they are working to modernize their HIV laws. Here in Oregon, CAP—along with our partners at the HIV Alliance and Our House of Portland—used the work done in Washington as a blueprint to examine our own statutes. While Oregon is in a much better place than our neighbors to the north, we did find some areas for improvement.

Senate Bill 142-1 is before this committee today to modernize Oregon's HIV laws to reflect current science and reduce outdated language and stigmatizing phrasing in statute.

Thank you for your time and consideration, we urge your support for SB 142 with the -1 amendment.

With Gratitude,

Peter Parisot

¹ Mahajan, A. P., Sayles, J. N., Patel, V. A., Remien, R. H., Ortiz, D., Szekeres, G., Coates, T. J. (2008) Stigma in the HIV/AIDS epidemic: A review of the literature and recommendations for the way forward. AIDS. 22 (Suppl 2), p67 – p79