



March 29, 2019

Dear Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, I'm writing to respectfully request your support for HB 2562. Basic Rights Oregon is an organization that advocates for public policy that meets the needs of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities, and centers on racial and transgender justice. Protecting and supporting our communities, particularly youth, is why our organization supports the funding increase for the Oregon Department of Education to prevent sexual harassment, bullying, and gender-based discrimination.

With only one .25 FTE State Title IX Coordinator at the Oregon Department of Education, who oversees Title IX enforcement and prevention of gender-based harassment and discrimination in all K-12 schools, it's apparent that aspects of Title IX protections are not being looked after or enforced. Each school site is required to have a Title IX Coordinator, but due to a lack of proper support, these coordinators do not receive guidance regarding how they can best do their jobs. This ultimately has a negative impact on students reporting harassment, as they often don't know who they can report to at school.

Sadly, bullying of LGBTQ students is more prevalent than ever. The outcomes of the recent Oregon Health Authority's Healthy Teens Survey indicate that 6.1% of 8th graders and 2.8% of 11th graders said they had been bullied because someone thought they were gay, lesbian or bisexual. It's unacceptable that students experience bullying like this, and they deserve a safe space at school, free from harassment.

That's why we support the recommendation from the Oregon Joint Committee on Student Success for the Oregon Department of Education to create a 1.75 FTE Title IX Coordinator. By creating two full time Title IX Coordinators, the lack of communication and gaps in training for local, school-based Title IX Coordinators will be addressed. LGBTQ students will have a better chance at reporting their experiences of harassment and discrimination to someone who cares and is easily accessible.

Our main priority is protecting our youth which is why we're writing in support of HB 2562. We strongly encourage you to support this bill as well.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Haque".

*Nancy Haque*

*Executive Director  
Basic Rights Oregon*