



February 18, 2020

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today in strong support of HB 4004 to make sure that every Oregonian has equal access to justice through adequate and quality legal representation regardless of income.

Basic Rights Oregon is the state's chief advocacy, education and political organization dedicated to ending discrimination against LGBTQ individuals. We currently run transgender justice and racial justice programs because we are committed to an intersectional approach. This ensures that all members of our community can change the policies that directly impact their lives, so that we can all work to end homophobia, transphobia and racism. We know that our movement for lived and legal equality is bigger than one vote, broader than one issue, and stronger than the fear and intolerance that we must overcome.

We hear from many people in our communities regarding their experiences with discrimination, and find that people of color and transgender Oregonians are more likely to experience profiling. According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 46% of transgender people say they would feel somewhat or very uncomfortable seeking police assistance, while only 35% said they would feel comfortable doing so. One-fifth (22%) of all trans people and 38% of Black trans people report experiencing transphobic police harassment—while 6% of all trans people, 9% of trans Latinos, and 15% of Black trans people report having experienced a transphobic assault by police.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, transgender people are also disproportionately unemployed and living in poverty according to the 2015 US Transgender Survey. This disparity is even higher for transgender people of color.

As a result of the cumulative impacts of experiencing discrimination in all aspects of life, including laws and policing strategies, as well the economic injustice surrounding lower incomes, many of our transgender neighbors here in Oregon

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<sup>1</sup> Grant, J. M., Mottet, L. A., & Tanis, J. (2011). Injustice at every turn: A report of the national transgender discrimination survey. Retrieved from: [http://www.thetaskforce.org/static\\_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds\\_full.pdf](http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_full.pdf)

have entered the public defense system where they often face further discrimination and mistreatment.

House Bill 4004 will help create more manageable caseload standards, provide critical training and support for public defenders, more accountability, and better access to wrap around services. These tools are critical to addressing some of the injustices faced by Oregonians represented by the public defense system.

We urge your support of HB 4004 to take one major step forward towards equal access to justice for all Oregonians.

Thank you,

Nancy Haque  
Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon