



TO: House Committee on Rules  
FROM: Nancy Haque, Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon  
DATE: 2/10/2022  
RE: Support for HB 4140 and -2 amendments

Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Fahey, and members of the House Rules Committee,

Basic Rights Oregon urges you to vote “Yes” on House Bill 4140 with the -2 amendments. Our organization fights for the lived equality of LGBTQ2SIA+ Oregonians, with an emphasis on racial justice and LGBTQ2SIA+ youth. This bill will ensure that our public entities operate within state law, and work for the benefit of all Oregonians.

Currently, Oregon public entities must follow state meeting laws to ensure accessibility and fairness—but there’s a lack of oversight and enforcement of those rules, and Oregonians have little recourse when their representatives fail to follow them. What’s more, not all entities receive the same training on meeting laws, meaning even well-intentioned elected officials can inadvertently violate state law.

Oregon’s public meeting laws exist to give community members a say in government decisions, and to make the meetings as accessible as possible. When those laws aren’t upheld, all Oregonians suffer. Underserved communities, such as LGBTQ2SIA+ folks and people of color, are put at a unique disadvantage, as they often have less access to elected leaders than more privileged Oregonians do.

HB 4140 provides a simple, pragmatic fix to this problem. It will require all elected officials to receive training on how Oregon’s public meetings work. The bill will also empower the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) to investigate reports of elected officials not following Oregon meeting law. That means our leaders will have a better opportunity to succeed in their roles. When they fail to uphold their duties to all Oregonians—particularly in a willful manner—an oversight system will rectify the situation.

Furthermore, the -2 amendment provides helpful clarification about which non-elected school officials should receive training, and gives the OGEC time to develop a comprehensive training curriculum before the law goes into full effect.

All Oregonians deserve a government that will work on their behalf, rather than wasting public time and resources by violating state meeting law. Please vote “Yes” on HB 4140 with the -2 amendments.

Thank you.