

Date: March 20th, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Rebecca S Congdon

RE: Support HB 2002

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Rebecca Congdon and I am writing to express **support for House Bill 2002, Reproductive Health and Access to Care**, which will help create a future in which every person in Oregon has the ability to make decisions about their own body and access the full range of reproductive, sexual, and gender affirming health care.

Access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health care is a basic human right.

Since the Dobbs decision we have seen a cascade of long-planned assaults on reproductive rights, as 18 states (including our neighbor, Idaho) now have abortion bans or serious restrictions in effect that restrict access to life saving medical intervention. In 2023 alone we have also seen more than 300 bills attacking LGBTQ+ people introduced to state legislatures across the country. As transgender rights and reproductive rights are under attack nationwide, Oregon has an opportunity to continue standing as a leader for LGBTQ+ rights, bodily autonomy and health care access. Everyone deserves access to lifesaving medical care and bodily autonomy. Nobody should be denied gender affirming care or safe reproductive care. HB 2002 provides protection for providers and health centers, expands access to care, and ensures fundamental rights of patients to access care without fear of criminalized for meeting their healthcare needs.

As a mother of three children with complex needs, living with several chronic health conditions, an unplanned pregnancy at this stage in my life would be life threatening. In addition to this reality, I have a child who has experienced extreme gender dysphoria and has required support as they process that journey. We've been blessed in Oregon to have access to scientifically based, compassionate, gender-affirming care as our family works to support our child through this very personal

and vulnerable journey. In February of 2022, Governor Abbott in Texas issued a letter to Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to investigate families supporting gender affirming care. This order was given in defiance of current medical opinions of several national organizations, and was outside of his scope as Governor. Governor Abbott's action, and labeling gender affirming care as "abuse" is a direct threat to parental rights, is an attack on the trans community, and is a dangerous attempt to intimidate a vulnerable population while fueling the fire of transphobic sentiment growing in this country. I take it personally as an attack against my rights as a parent, and against my child's right to self determination and expression. Care choices around gender care and reproductive health are solemn, personal and private. And the opinions and agendas of political groups and religious communities have no place in healthcare. We are relying on leaders in Oregon to affirm their protection of reproductive healthcare and gender affirming care, and continue to keep Oregon a safe haven for individuals and families.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 2002, to protect me. To protect my children. And to protect the people who live in our beautiful state. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Congdon