

Submitter: Dana Barbar  
On Behalf Of: Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure: HB2002

Chair Nosse, Members of the Committee:

My name is Dana Barbar, I'm a volunteer with PPAO, and I live in Lake Oswego. I am writing to express support for HB 2002, which will help create a future in which everyone in Oregon has the ability and autonomy to make decisions about their own bodies and futures, and access the full range of reproductive, sexual, and gender affirming healthcare.

I would like to share about my regular abortion. I say 'regular' because many of the stories that you may hear about abortion are rooted in some kind of special circumstance. While those stories are necessary and highlight that the reasons someone chooses to have an abortion are deeply personal and unique to the individual, they can sometimes perpetuate an idea that abortion is only justified in certain circumstances. My abortion story is not special. I was raised with conservative Christian values surrounding sex that were confusing to me, because I wanted to be a good person, but I was also a sexual person with desires. So when I was a 19-year old college student with a very cute boyfriend, I decided to act on those sexual desires. And because I had taken a purity pledge as a teenager, I wasn't on any type of birth control - I didn't think I would ever need it until I was married. So a few weeks after my boyfriend I had unprotected sex, I found out I was pregnant. I was terrified. But there was one thing I felt more than fear, and that was a feeling of complete, divine certainty. Every fiber in my being knew that I did not want to be a parent, and I didn't want to be pregnant anymore. I knew I wanted to have an abortion. I kept waiting to feel guilty, because I was taught that abortion was the gravest of all sins, but I didn't. There was no guilt – there was only clarity and empowerment. So, I made a choice. The next morning, I went to Planned Parenthood for an official pregnancy test, and scheduled an abortion for a few days later.

And then I had my normal abortion. I say 'normal' because there was no special circumstance involved – I didn't choose to have one because of any health issues, the pregnancy was not the result of a sexual trauma, and I had no issues accessing this abortion. I lived in Portland, there were multiple clinics within 10 miles of me, my boyfriend offered to pay for the procedure and provide transportation/moral support, and the health care staff treated me with kindness, dignity and respect. If you were to write a fairytale about abortion, my story would be it – I needed, wanted, and had the right to a medical procedure, and I was able to get it: safely, legally, and by professionals who cared about me.

When I was asked to share testimony in support of RHAC, I thought my story wouldn't be relevant because it's pretty basic! There's no struggle, it's just easy. But then I remembered that easy abortion stories are literally what we are fighting for. Abortion is normal. Abortion is healthcare. And every pregnant person who decides to have an abortion should be able to access one. It's SUPPOSED to be easy. It's been 13 years since I had my easy abortion, which for me means that it's been 13 years of being able to savor a cup of tea in the morning, to budget for travel and Beyonce concerts instead of childcare, to read a book uninterrupted, to work through my own relationship with God, and so many other normal human experiences. But mostly it's been 13 years of knowing that I have divine ownership over my own life. I now know that I have agency, that I am the one who calls the shots in my life, and I call a child-free, shame-free, pleasure-filled normal existence!

I was so fortunate to be able to access the safe abortion I had. Every Oregonian deserves that chance, no matter their location, language, income, or reasons for choosing to receive abortion care. Every healthcare provider deserves to be protected while providing this necessary life-affirming care. This is why I urge your YES vote on HB 2002.

Thank you, Dana