

TO: Oregon House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

FROM: Maximum J. Murphy

RE: Support for HB 2002

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chair Goodwin and Nelson, and Committee Members,

I am asking you to vote yes on HB 2002, because gender-affirming health care is life-saving care. This bill will close gaps in insurance coverage of critical care for transgender Oregonians.

I was 40 years old and had four young children before I decided to transition from a woman to a man. People often ask how my transition affected my kids. I remind them that Carl Jung taught us that, “There is no greater burden on a child than the unlived life of a parent.” So, for myself, and for my kids, I decided to live my life and say goodbye to the woman I was for 40 years. My kids didn’t lose me as their mom when I transitioned; they found their parent finally living his life in his fullness. I made the brave decision to transition because I love my kids and I knew it was the right thing to do despite my fears around access to transgender healthcare.

After deciding to transition, I was very fortunate to access gender affirming “top surgery” before losing my health insurance benefits due to divorce. Having top surgery was pivotal in that it gave me the emotional and psychological strength to continue on and rebuild my life. Having top surgery has made it possible for me to face ongoing challenges in life and show up for myself and my kids in ways that would not have been possible without it. I cannot overstate the positive impact having top surgery has had on my physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual and social well being.

Oregon is already a leader on trans health care access, but gaps in insurance coverage still exist for care that is crucial for many trans people, including electrolysis (hair removal) and facial affirmation surgeries.

These procedures are seen as “cosmetic” under Oregon insurance policy, but I can assure you that for trans people, these are medically necessary procedures that improve life outcomes for this population. I know from experience that these procedures are not “cosmetic” but rather the tethers to one’s sense of self as a person in the world.

You have an opportunity to advance legislation that will be truly life-changing—and perhaps even lifesaving—for transgender Oregonians like me. Please remember my story when you are voting on this bill, and please vote yes on HB 2002.

Thank you,

Maximum J. Murphy