

TO: Oregon House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
FROM: Susan Hanson, a resident of Wilsonville
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 have a friend, who is transgender, and has faced many struggles getting appropriate medical care. She has encountered services that were not available, inappropriate questions, lack of understanding of her needs and dismissive attitudes. This has caused her great stress and depression. She has considered suicide several times. I fear for her safety.

Also, as a woman, I strongly support the need for access to all reproductive services in Oregon, in this bill. I have seen first-hand how lack of access negatively affected by friends' lives and livelihoods. It is vital that women in all counties have access to reproductive health services, especially rural areas. We need to make sure that providers, patients and helpers are protected. The intimidation by pro-life forces is outrageous. These threats are all around us. Not having access affects women economically, psychologically and endangers their health. Please keep the protections in place and strengthen them.

All Oregonians deserve access to the medical and psychological care they need without undue hassle or burdens. It is life-saving care.

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. One of the most important things is for transgender people to be seen as their true selves. Without these procedures, they are vulnerable to violence and hate, as we have seen time and again.

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

Thank you,

Susan Hanson

Wilsonville, Oregon