

Date: March 19, 2023  
To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
From: Katherine Watson  
RE: Support HB 2002

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

My name is Katherine Watson, 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 everyone in Oregon has the ability to make decisions about their own bodies and access the full range of reproductive, sexual, and gender affirming health care.

All of us, LGBTQ+ or otherwise, deserve access to life-saving medical care. Gender affirming care, through study after study, has been repeatedly demonstrated to belong to this category. In 2023 alone, 300+ bills have been introduced aiming to erode the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals. My partner and I have been deeply concerned for the well-being of those in a similar position to us across the nation, so I firmly believe that my home state of Oregon should continue to stand in support of its LGBTQ+ constituents.

The State of Washington enacted very similar legislation to this bill in 2021 with little resulting fiscal impact. At the same time, HB 2002 has strong potential to provide and protect equitable access to care for all Oregonians.

As a transgender woman who grew up in Oregon and was terrified by the prospect of how hard transition would be, I was remarkably lucky to live in an area where access to HRT and other gender affirming care was straightforward to access. This care has been critical to my survival and well-being. Because of it, I finally overcame a severe bout of suicidal depression and finally was able to develop the technology startup I wanted. I've seen first-hand the remarkable positive effects that access to gender-affirming care can have, both in my life and the lives of many friends. It is my firm belief that the passage of HB 2002 would have a significant impact in improving the quality of life of Oregonians statewide.

This is why I urge your yes vote on HB 2002. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Watson