



**NORTHWEST
ABORTION
ACCESS FUND**

March 20, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Megan Kovacs, Northwest Abortion Access Fund

RE: Support HB 2002

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

My name is Megan Kovacs, and I'm a board member and volunteer for the Northwest Abortion Access Fund, the only abortion fund serving the Pacific Northwest. We fund abortions and break down barriers to abortion access. Our trained, compassionate volunteer advocates run our toll-free hotline - we pay for the cost of abortions, help people get to and from the clinic, and we make sure people traveling for care have everything they need. We help pay for their prescriptions, send them the essentials they need to manage pain and bleeding after their procedure, as well as food and snacks.

We envision a world where all people have the power and resources to care for and affirm their bodies, identities, and health for themselves and their families—in all areas of their lives. I am writing to express support for **House Bill 2002, Reproductive Health and Access to Care**, which will help get us closer to that very future we are striving for at the Northwest Abortion Access Fund - one 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.

Since the *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision by the United States Supreme Court that decimated abortion access across the country in June 2022, we have seen a 71% increase in callers seeking abortion funding and travel support in Oregon. We have spoken with callers from over 30 states who are seeking a safe, supportive community to access abortion care, because they can not do so in their own home state. **I am proud to live and work in a state that understands abortion is healthcare, and remains committed to protecting and expanding access.**

However; because of that influx of abortion seekers, providers are stretched thin. Appointments are harder and harder to come by. People have to travel long distances to access the healthcare they need and they are forced to wait longer and longer to access care, making their abortion procedures more expensive and more difficult. .

Legislatures in states that are hostile to abortion and gender affirming care, and have outright banned it, are also seeking to criminalize and attack access to care in safe havens like Oregon.

This bill is a step toward solving the barriers people are facing to access care in Oregon, and protecting the providers and healthcare workers who provide that access.

I've been volunteering on the abortion fund hotline since 2015 and I've been helping friends manage their abortions since high school. I've spoken with hundreds of callers who need funding for their abortions and/or need to travel for them. **I have never worked in a climate that is more difficult to access healthcare than I have as a hotline volunteer over the last nine months.**

I have walked alongside and witnessed some of the most daunting circumstances while helping people access this necessary care. **People's lives are literally at risk.** I've had callers whose abortion medication failed and were fighting against the clock to access care elsewhere. Many were refused sonograms in their home state because providers feared risking their license after they found out they tried to self-manage their abortion. These people could have died from sepsis if it weren't for our ability to support them to get on a plane, travel here, and help save their life by having an abortion. I've had callers whose wanted pregnancies were killing them, and they had to travel hundreds of miles so that they could get the healthcare they needed to save their life.

In an ideal world, people would be able to access the healthcare they need in their own community, surrounded by their loved ones. We are impossibly far from that ideal right now, but what we can do is make Oregon the safest place possible to access abortion and gender affirming care.

The stakes could not be higher.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 2002. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Megan Kovacs
Board member and volunteer
Northwest Abortion Access Fund