

Submitter: Kris Bifulco

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2002

I'm writing to voice my strong support for the entirety of HB 2002. As an Oregonian, I am so excited to see this bill presented and urge the house to move it forward. There is so much to be excited for in this bill: protecting healthcare and expanding access to it while preserving the autonomy of the individual and protecting the provider-patient relationship; guaranteeing Oregonians the right to make decisions about their body and healthcare without fear of retribution; protecting providers who provide medically necessary care; closing coverage gaps in insurance; working toward equity for those who have not had access to comprehensive healthcare due to geography; protecting gender affirming care; and more. This bill builds on other legislative successes and reflects our state's commitment to health equity.

Everyone deserves access to life-saving medical care. Nobody should be denied gender affirming care. In 2023 alone, more than 400 bills attacking LGBTQ+ people have been introduced to state legislatures across the country. As transgender rights in particular are under attack nationwide, Oregon has the chance here to be a real leader for the rest of the country in recognizing the rights of the people to receive healthcare and make health decisions.

As a suicide prevention specialist, I've been watching detrimental bills move through state legislatures in horror, knowing that restricting access to reproductive and gender affirming healthcare can increase risk of suicide, violence, and other negative health outcomes. I have loved ones in other states who are now facing hard decisions about their lives moving forward- should they uproot their lives to continue receiving medical care? Will they have the right to exist in public in the next 6 months? Is there anywhere they can go to be safe and healthy? Can they access life-saving care if the unthinkable happens during a pregnancy? Oregonians should not have to face those questions or the resulting despair that I've seen my loved ones cope with while they try to envision a future. Hope for the future is a strong protective factor against suicide, and I've seen hope draining away as more harmful bills are introduced nationwide.

Oregon is on a good path forward with HB 2002. This bill will save lives and contribute to a healthier and happier Oregon. We all deserve that. I urge you to vote YES on HB 2002. It is the right thing to do.