

Date: March 20th, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Elisha Foster Griggs

RE: Support HB 2002

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

My name is Eli Foster Griggs 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.

For too many Oregonians, reproductive and gender affirming care are still out-of-reach because of geography, income, or insurance coverage. Eighteen states currently have abortion bans or serious restrictions in effect, including our neighbor Idaho. This decreased access exacerbates existing reproductive health care deserts, especially in Eastern Oregon, as out state experiences a surge in out-of-state patients. Washington state enacted very similar legislation in 2021, and there has been very little fiscal impact to the state. Like any other form of life-saving health care, gender-affirming care should be accessible.

I come from a state that saw its LGBTQIA+ community as a disease to be eradicated, and they are currently continuing to pass legislation that dehumanizes many in my community. They see freedom as a right of a few not for all. I grew up in that world. My family sent me to conversion therapy and then when that failed disowned me because that is what society and their church told them to do. Oregon was my sanctuary. It was here that I found community not just in the marginalized groups but everywhere. People didn't just say they valued freedom for all, they exuded it, voted for it, and thrived in that diversity by embracing it. It was here that I was able to receive the gender-affirming care I needed to survive. Transgender people don't get to do that often due to society degrading us, questioning our existence, or due to the hate crimes committed against us. Gender-affirming care is a life saving procedure. If we all value life then this is a simple decision. Protect our youth, protect your people, show them you care.

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

Sincerely,  
Eli Foster Griggs