

Date: March 20, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Everett Redente

RE: Support HB 2002

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

My name is Everett Redente 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 every person in Oregon has the ability to make decisions about their own body and access the full range of reproductive, sexual, and gender affirming health care.

HB 2002 affirms what we already know; everyone deserves access to lifesaving medical care. Access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health care is a basic human right. This bill would take what we are already practicing in Oregon and take it a few steps further, protecting some of our most vulnerable communities' access to care. HB 2002 is essential in closing gaps in: insurance coverage for gender affirming care, contraception access on OHP, and reproductive healthcare services at public universities, all while protecting individuals from prosecution for seeking or supporting reproductive and gender affirming care that is legal in our state.

As a transgender person, I know firsthand the impact that this bill has on me and my community. I have been fortunate enough to access gender affirming care in many forms, including surgery right here in the state of Oregon. I can say with absolute certainty that I would not be alive today if I did not have access to this care. Gender affirming care saves lives. In my professional work as a social worker working within the Medicaid system, I support transgender and non-binary Oregonians who are low income and disabled every day. I am frequently reminded of the importance of this care as clients share feelings of safety, belonging, and gender euphoria, some of whom are experiencing these feelings for the first time in their lives.

As states around the country continue to limit and prohibit access to lifesaving care, Oregon has the opportunity to protect this access and be a champion for reproductive and transgender rights. This is why I urge your yes vote on HB 2002. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Everett Redente, CSWA