

Date: March 21, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Ray Anthony, Gender Affirming Patient Navigator for Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette

RE: Support HB 2002

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

My name is Ray Anthony, and as the Gender Affirming Patient Navigator for Planned Parenthood and a community member I am writing to express support for House Bill 2002, Reproductive Health and Access to Care. Passing this bill will be a step towards stronger reproductive legislation in Oregon. It will reinforce the values Oregon exemplifies which is that everyone has the ability to make decisions about their own bodies and access the full range of reproductive, sexual, and gender affirming health care.

Strengthening reproductive health laws and increasing access to transgender, nonbinary, and gender affirming care is life-saving. Passing HB2002 would mean that my community and people I serve would be able to access care in a nation that has in the last two years criminalized abortion and increased fear in populations historically told they have little to no right over their bodies. Strengthening reproductive health care will put the power back to people making reproductive decisions about their own bodies.

I have experienced and seen first-hand how insurance has used insidious ways to restrict care that is necessary to affirm a person. As a patient navigator I try to connect people to healthcare, and work largely with folks on OHP. Often, I see barriers put up by insurance and health systems with little to no protection for prior authorization denials. If a person does not know how to navigate an appeal they will give up, and the repercussions of this can be detrimental to a person's health. This especially means that we need to recognize how deeming surgeries necessary to support a person cannot be deemed "optional" or "cosmetic". All gender-affirming surgeries are life-saving, and should be treated as such.

What have we seen? We have seen that increased access to safe and accessible reproductive healthcare has allowed a person to pursue reproductive health the way they see fit for their body, influencing our medical system, resulting in better quality healthcare for all genders. We have seen the transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse community access care to support their life-saving journey's in the way they need. Without this care, we also know people will search out ways to get the medical care they need. Without a strong bill to support us, healthcare will continue to have gaps in care and insurance companies coupled with hateful legislation will continue disparities in health. We need to be the example of how healthcare can serve all people.

Thank you for your time in reading through, and considering communities affected.

Sincerely,

Ray Anthony

Pronouns: They/Them/Theirs (or no pronouns)

Gender Affirming Care Patient Navigator

Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette

With acknowledgment we occupy original land of Multnomah, Cowlitz, Clackamas, Kalapuya, Umatilla, Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde