



Senate Committee on Human Services
Testimony in support of SB 99 w/2 Amendments
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AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With over 38 million nationwide and 500,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment.

We know that most Oregonians want to remain in community and age in place. From our nationwide research, over two-thirds of LGBTQ adults age 45+ would prefer to stay at home as long as possible and prefer long-term care at home with caregiver assistance for themselves or a loved one if needed.

But that is not always possible for some of our most vulnerable older Oregonians and they must rely on long term supports and services, including residing in long term care facilities. The role of the state is to make sure we not only honor independence, choice, dignity, autonomy and privacy of Oregonians living in long term care facilities, we fully support systems that provide critical safeguards and protections. Those protections must include LGBTQ+ Oregonians.

Oregon has the highest LGBTQ+ population proportion of any state after the District of Columbia. Despite Oregon's commitment to an inclusive state, many LGBTQ+ older Oregonians continue to face widespread disparities negatively impacting their health, financial resilience, and overall quality of life.

As has already been mentioned, Oregon did a landmark survey on LGBTQ+ older Oregonians in 2021 commissioned by the Oregon Department of Human Services. It is full of great data that should guide our policies. Just one example, nearly 60% of those participating reported having experienced discrimination within the last year, one quarter of that being in residential settings and health care.

While Oregon has not studied LGBTQ+ receiving long-term care services, we can be informed by the data in other states. AARP New York and SAGE's joint report *Disrupting Disparities: Solutions for LGBTQ New Yorkers Age 50+* found that LGBTQ older adults do face discrimination, abuse, and neglect by long-term care service providers. Too often LGBTQ older adults feel that they must closet their identity out of fear of long-term care staff. According to a recent survey of NY LGBTQ long-term care residents, 89% reported discrimination by staff, 81% reported discrimination by other residents, and 53% reported abuse or neglect by staff as significant issues in these facilities.

It's our hope that those numbers would not be the same in Oregon. But regardless of the numbers, residents of long-term care facilities deserve to age with dignity as their authentic selves, regardless of their gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or HIV status.

SB 99 would create an LGBTQ+ long-term care facility resident's bill of rights to protect residents from discriminatory actions taken by long-term care facilities. This bill specifically includes prohibitions on actions taken wholly or partially based on one's perceived gender identity, sexual orientation, or HIV status such as denying admission, transfer, or discharge requests; inappropriate room assignments for transgender patients; and denying or restricting medical or non-medical care.

We support this effort and urge this committee to pass SB 99 with the -2 amendments.