

TO: Oregon House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

FROM: Dayna Sinopoli, USN Veteran

RE: Support for HB 2002

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson and Committee Members,

I am asking you to vote support on HN 2002 because it is both humane and life-saving.

I lived as a child, a young person and even into my adulthood without a word for my internal questions. I wasn't gay, but back then I would be a "Homo" or "Queer" or "F*ggot". And even the suggestion of this was socially terrifying and certain to cause even more problems for me in the Catholic Italian family. This meant I had to construct and maintain a kind of life that I didn't understand and couldn't maintain without an incredible amount of emotional strife. I had to carry this into my adult life and even though I had many privileges, the social taxation on being transgender served as its own blockade.

As a new Oregon citizen I am happy to know that Oregon is already a leader in trans healthcare access, but gaps in insurance coverage still exist for care that is crucial for many trans people including electrolysis and facial affirmation surgeries.

These procedures are considered "cosmetic" under Oregon insurance, but I can speak to how, for trans citizens, these are medically necessary, and facilitate a more presentable appearance for us to merge into our new lives and be the productive members of our cities, state and the nation. Transitioning is laborious, and much as I wish it weren't, it's largely a matter of presentation.

I can speak to electrolysis as being expensive, some estimate that the out of pocket cost could come close to surgery in some cases, yet that single procedure does an immense service to transgender people. Imagine having had a long day at school or work and having to go to the store for dinner but having even more concerns over your appearance due to 5 o'clock shadow. A transgender person who presents more completely is more comfortable and safer physically.

You have a unique opportunity to support legislation that will be both transformative and perhaps even life saving, for transgender Oregonians. I had an abundance of opportunities and privilege when I transitioned but as I came to learn most transgender people face a plethora of obstacles. Passing HB 2002 will most certainly mitigate two of these obstacles the financial and the social. Transgender people have as much to offer to society as any other person.

Please remember my story and the many that have been presented to you when you vote yes on HB 2002, give us one more reason to be proud of living in Oregon.

Thank you

Dayna Sinopoli