

Submitter: Katherine Souza

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2002

Date: March 22, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Katherine Souza

RE: Support HB 2002

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

My name is Katherine Souza 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.

HB 2002 centers those who face the most barriers to accessing care in policy-making and resourcing. The recommendations from Speaker Rayfield's Reproductive Health and Access to Care Work Group were developed in lockstep with impacted communities, providers, and organizations working on the ground to meet this moment. These recommendations include but are not limited to:

Protecting Providers and Health Centers:

Protecting providers' ability to provide care to all patients who seek gender affirming care and reproductive healthcare in Oregon

Preventing interference with health care centers and protecting providers from harassment and abuse

Ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of providers is protected

Expanding Access to Care:

Closing gaps in: insurance coverage for gender affirming care, contraception access on OHP, and reproductive healthcare services at public universities

Enhancing access to care in medically-underserved regions through a pilot mobile health clinic program

Addressing reproductive health care deserts by expanding services at existing health centers at public institutions

Ensuring Fundamental Rights:

Protecting individuals from prosecution for seeking or supporting reproductive and gender affirming care that is legal in our state

Codifying the right to the full spectrum of reproductive care

Preventing individuals from being criminalized for any pregnancy outcome

Access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health care is a basic human right. Washington state enacted very similar legislation to this bill 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.

As a woman, I feel the pressure of the anti-abortion and women's health bills in my life because these take away my ability to make choices for my own body. The government should not have a hand in personal and sensitive matters such as reproductive health care. This bill will further protect bodily autonomy in Oregon. Further, though I am not a LGBTQAI+ person, gender-affirming care is essential to a fair and equitable society. There should be no risk of the person giving or receiving gender-affirming care. This bill will make that certain.

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

Sincerely,

Katherine Souza