



April 26, 2023

To: Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and Members of the Committee
From: Margot Martin, Deputy Director, Basic Rights Oregon

Since 1996, our nonprofit advocacy organization has fought for the legal and lived equality of LGBTQ+ Oregonians, at the local and statewide level.

Today, I want to use my time to express to you how crucial SJR 33 is for the communities we serve. Every day at Basic Rights Oregon, we hear from LGBTQ+ Oregonians who are afraid.

We hear from married couples, some of whom waited decades to marry each other, who worry what the current Supreme Court could do to their unions. These are people with families and homes and lives built around each other, and now they live with the fear that the legal foundation of those lives could be yanked out from under them. They see the Oregon Constitution's definition of marriage between a man and a woman, and they question whether they can rely on this state to protect their rights.

We hear from transgender adults—people who have already medically and socially transitioned, and are finally living in a way that is safe and authentic to them. They are watching other states roll back their rights to use public restrooms, access the medical care they've been relying on for years, be protected from discrimination, or even EXIST in public. And they are not immune to the violent rhetoric being used to describe their lives and bodies. They know that in Oregon, we could always be one election away from those same anti-trans laws passing here.

We hear from young people who are navigating their own gender journeys, and those same youth's parents. These families are assessing the options available to them and are guided by mental health providers and doctors. Together they're making the best choices for their kids based on medical best practices. But they know that in other states, kids like theirs are being denied those options, and parents like them might be criminalized simply for loving and supporting their kids.

We hear from LGBTQ+ Oregonians who have made the choice to move here from another state, seeking a home where they can freely be who they are, love who they love, and not have politicians interfering with those fundamental freedoms. Those Oregonians are now looking around at the political climate against LGBTQ+ folks, and worry that even Oregon might not be an affirming place for them in the future.

I'm writing today to represent these Oregonians, as a proud queer woman myself with many queer and trans loved ones. I'm here because you have the historic opportunity to advance SJR 33, and ensure that Oregon protects the rights of all people to be who we are and love who we love. Oregon already has some of the strongest pro-LGBTQ+ equality laws in the country, and it's time to explicitly enshrine those

protections in the state Constitution. It's time to amend the shameful anti-gay history that's still written, in black and white, in that Constitution. It's time to stand up for ALL Oregonians' fundamental freedoms, and affirm Oregon values.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margot Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Margot" and the last name "Martin" clearly distinguishable.

Margot Martin (she/her)
Deputy Director