

My name is Rowan Everard and I am transgender man living in Portland. I moved here in 2008 because I had heard that Portland was a good place to be trans. I didn't know for sure if I wanted to transition at that time, but I felt strongly enough about it that I moved 3000 miles away from my home state of Illinois to a place where I didn't know anyone, just in case. It turned out that I did want to transition, and I began doing so in 2010.

At that time, there wasn't great access to transition-related care anywhere, even in Portland. There were 3 doctors in town you could see, and people had to pay out of pocket most of the time because billing the visits was hard to do. There was one surgeon in the area who performed top surgery (transmasculine chest reconstruction) and sometimes he didn't use anesthesia for the procedure. Despite being an obviously criminal level of malpractice, this surgeon was never reported to the Oregon medical board because he was the only person in the state of Oregon that people could see. The only other options were in California or Florida, where a person would need to pay for a hotel room and a plane ticket in addition to the 7-10K out of pocket for the surgery itself.

Over the last 10 years things have been getting better in the state. Most insurance now covers transition-related care, and as a result there are many more providers being trained and practicing. The provider mentioned above has quietly stopped performing top surgeries and faded from view. There is still much work to do, but we've reached a place where it is possible for most people who need to transition to do so.

This is not the case in the rest of the country, to put it mildly. People are fleeing states like Florida and Texas to come here, to escape bans on trans care at all ages and the threat that children will be stolen from their families if they support their trans kids, as well as the vigilante violence that such policies encourage. When the state targets people with administrative violence, the people who hate follow. We are lucky that Oregon is currently not one of those states, but we are also acutely aware that we are one bad governor's race away from being next.

That is why I am urging you to support SJR 33, to let the voters decide to codify equality into the Oregon constitution. Every person has the right to bodily autonomy, to make their own medical decisions about what is right for their body, regardless of who comes to power in state government.

Thank you for your consideration,  
-Rowan Everard