

Date: April 25, 2023  
To: Senate Committee on Rules  
Re: Support for SJR 33



Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

My name is Liz James and my pronouns are she or they. As a proud LGBTQ+ identified older adult Oregonian and Chair, I submit this testimony on behalf of the Oregon LGBTQ+ Aging Coalition. We are a statewide Coalition composed of representatives from public and private organizations, adults age 50+ and others from across the state who support and are committed to improving the well-being of older LGBTQ+ Oregonians through research, education and advocacy efforts.

We support Senate Joint Resolution 33.

We believe everyone deserves a life free from discrimination. We believe people should have the fundamental freedom to make decisions about their own healthcare, including abortion and gender affirming care, and the right to marry who they love

We are witnessing increased attacks on our fundamental rights and freedoms. LGBTQ+ older adults lived most of their lives unable to legally marry who they love. Many, if not most, also experienced many forms of discrimination and, for far too many, violence. The 2021 Oregon LGBTQ+ Older Adult survey sheds light on the resulting trauma from lived experiences and persistent discrimination and disparities.

This is why we can't take any of our progress for granted. SJR 33 will ensure our state constitution will be clear that every Oregonian, regardless of sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, is afforded the same protections to live a life free of government actions that discriminate — from housing and employment to public accommodation to state services. Our state constitution will be clear that people can marry who we love, removing Oregon's ban on same-gender marriage that was inserted into our constitution nearly two decades ago.

We urge you to pass SJR 33 and refer the Equal Rights for All measure to the voters. Oregon voters deserve to have our voices heard.

Thank you Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee.

Respectfully,

Liz James  
Chair, Oregon LGBTQ+ Aging Coalition