



Focused on what is important to you

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Good afternoon, Members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Lorena Reynolds. I am an attorney based in Corvallis. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today about HB4088. I am here to specifically to address the importance of the provisions relating to confidentiality of name and gender marker changes for trans and non-binary Oregonians.

For more than 25 years, I have been assisting people who are transgender or non-binary to change their names and gender markers on their legal identification documents so that they align with their gender identity. As a State, we have worked hard to establish a system that is accessible to people seeking to update their identification documents so that they are consistent and accurate. This has been vital work that both protects their safety and allows them access to systems and services that those of us who are not transgender take for granted.

I am proud of the work that we have done in Oregon. We know that people who are trans and non-binary still experience not only hate crimes, including serious assaults and murder, but also discrimination at every level of public and private life. Having mismatched identification documents increases the risk by unnecessarily “outing” people across settings. Until January of this year, we were making great strides towards making the system seamless, safe, and accessible. With the dismantling of the federal system that was catching up to our protections, trans and non-binary Oregonians find themselves at great risk of harm. This bill will help streamline the process of making name and gender marker changes confidential, which will add a layer of protection for those who find themselves having to make difficult decisions about their identification documents.

Under the current structure, petitioners seeking to shield their name and gender marker changes from the public, thus keeping their information from being easily searched, only have the option of sealing the gender marker change, which does not protect their privacy and also makes accessing them when necessary needlessly burdensome. Having the name changes publicly searchable leaves petitioners vulnerable to anyone seeking to identify trans and non-binary people in general or specifically.

HB 4088 makes records confidential by default, which is most often what petitioners

would prefer, however, it allows flexibility for those with specific concerns (particularly as they relate to immigration, security clearance and background checks) to have their records treated as public.

I am asking you to please move this HB 4088 forward with your support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lorena Reynolds".

Lorena Reynolds
Attorney at Law

LR/bh