

Dear Chair Representative Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice-Chair Wallan and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Olivia Hnilicka. I am writing in strong support of HB 4088, the Strengthening Patient and Provider Privacy Act. I work as a peer support specialist in transgender health care, and I have spent years walking alongside patients through some of the most significant medical decisions of their lives. From that experience, I can tell you that trust and privacy are not luxuries in this work. They are the foundation on which care is built.

Why This Bill Matters to Me: In my role, I see firsthand how the threat of surveillance and criminalization affects patients before they ever walk through the door. Patients ask me whether their information is safe. They ask whether seeking care could follow them, whether their name or gender marker could become public. These are not hypothetical fears. They are the reality that patients in our state are navigating right now, and they are causing people to delay or avoid care they desperately need. HB 4088 speaks directly to the work I do every day. Current Oregon law from 2023 protects many health care providers addresses, but it does not explicitly extend those privacy protections to peer support staff, clinic managers, or medical assistants, and it does not cover images or phone numbers. This bill closes that gap. It also ensures that name and gender marker changes become confidential upon filing, rather than requiring individuals to go through a separate process to request that their records be sealed. For the patients I support, these protections are not abstract. They are the difference between feeling safe enough to move forward with care and feeling too exposed to try.

What Is at Stake: Across the country, federal agencies and out-of-state officials are taking increasingly aggressive steps to investigate and punish providers of gender-affirming and reproductive health care, even when that care is entirely legal. In 2025 alone, the U.S. Department of Justice issued more than 20 subpoenas to hospitals and clinics, demanding sensitive patient records. Health care systems nationwide are pausing care simply out of fear. Oregon has an opportunity, and a responsibility, to stand as a clear counterpoint to that trend by ensuring that our patients and providers are protected by law. I urge you to vote YES on HB 4088. Patients in Oregon deserve to access lawful health care without fear of surveillance or retaliation. Providers and support staff deserve to do their jobs without fear for their safety. This bill makes both of those things possible. Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to the people of Oregon.