

02/02/2026

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen and Wallan, and members of the House Judiciary committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Basic Rights Oregon. My name is Seth Johnstone, I serve as the Interim Director of Policy and Research. As an organization involved in the workgroup for the bill, we strongly urge your support for House Bill 4088.

Our organization has connected statewide with concerned medical providers, attorneys, patients and their family members, and those who care about healthcare in Oregon.

HB4088 is a federal response bill that would fortify protections against efforts to investigate, punish, or penalize individuals providing or receiving legal health care. It is a procedural bill that addresses legal protections for medical providers to continue to do their jobs. The bill also protects data that, if it remained public or wasn't safeguarded, could be misused to harm our communities.

To date, due to increasing threats from the federal government agencies and state bans, an estimated 33 hospitals and healthcare entities in other states have paused or stopped gender related healthcare indefinitely, which resulted in the cutting off behavioral health services, stopping the ability for patients to continue getting their medications they'd been on for years. The reasons the hospital administrations cited stopping care were increasing investigations of their providers, overbroad patient data requests being received by their hospitals, and a lack of law in their states that would protect their patients and providers from harm that would allow them to effectively provide the reassurance to continue without impact.

Consequentially, there are mental and physical consequences happening all over the country to those patients who've had their care cut off or live in a state with a new law that bans the provision of certain reproductive or LGBTQ+ healthcare services. Our medical and behavioral health providers and their teams here in Oregon are terrified. While we have established laws that address out of state impacts to their licenses, other states have taken further steps since 2023 to address these new federal threats. Oregon needs to address the new challenges that have emerged that threaten our healthcare systems. The gender affirming care patients that providers see may a small portion of their overall patient workload but the threats from the federal government and other state laws related to anyone providing that care are intended to remove them from our entire healthcare system by impacting their licenses for doing what is legal healthcare here in Oregon.

Rural and smaller healthcare entities in Oregon have ceased providing this care, overloading our providers in urban areas. Our providers are concerned for their safety, appointments have been cancelled and programs have paused services and our families and patients have suffered because of it. These doctors deserve to serve their patients without concern for their safety. Additionally, patient data and gender identity-related court documents are now vulnerable if they remain public and are being misused across the country, placing specific populations at risk of harassment and violence.

With the speed and level of the threats increasing by the day, now is the time to take this next step like many states already have (Some Examples: CA, WA, MA, NY, IL, MN, VT, DE). Basic Rights Oregon thanks Representative Fragala and Representative Chotzen for considering this an urgent need for our state to respond to federal attacks on our healthcare providers and our patients. We strongly urge you to support House Bill 4088. Thank you for your time and consideration.