

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

My name is Holly. I am the parent of a young transgender adult in Tigard, Oregon. I'm writing in strong support for HB 4088.

When I say that receiving gender-affirming care is literally a matter of life and death for my daughter, I am not being hyperbolic. She knew from a very young age that she was a girl. She began receiving puberty blockers at age eleven and hormones later that year to affirm her identity. When she was about nine years old, my daughter and her younger brother were playing a game of "What if" while I drove. They took turns saying silly things about each other, and her brother said, "What if you had a beard?" She immediately became quiet, and I watched in the rearview mirror as my silly, joking little girl's face fell. I will never forget the way she curled in upon herself. The mere suggestion of her developing masculine secondary sexual characteristics shut her down. We had already begun meeting with an endocrinologist to monitor for signs of natal puberty. If there was any question before about whether she needed gender-affirming care, her response to her five-year-old brother's innocent joke sealed it for me. I could never put her through that.

Fast forward seven or eight years; my daughter had been on puberty blockers and hormones for over a third of her life and was now pursuing gender-affirming surgery. We got letters from therapeutic professionals affirming her unwavering identity, attended a consultation with a prospective surgeon, and continued to meet with the care system's social worker. We did everything required in order for her to get her surgery at the age recommended by multiple experts. Less than a month after Trump was elected and before he came into office, her care team informed her that she was going to have to wait. When Trump put out an Executive Order threatening to withdraw Medicaid funds from healthcare systems that provided gender-affirming surgery for anyone under age 19, they put her surgery on further pause. We made multiple trips to the Emergency Room because without this surgery, she felt her life would not be worth living. We have since found care in another state from a surgeon who continues to perform gender-affirming surgeries on young trans women. The surgery will now be a year later than originally planned. Our family has the means to make this happen for our daughter. Many other families do not.

With increasing attacks from the federal administration on reproductive rights and LGBTQ+ health care, this bill is critical in safeguarding patient privacy, protecting medical providers from mounting criminalization threats, and ensuring that all Oregonians can receive the health care they need without fear of discrimination. The increasing number of threats in the last few years makes the need for this bill urgent. Oregonians cannot afford to wait. In Oregon, this care remains legal, and providers should be able to deliver it without fear of federal intimidation or retaliation.

HB 4088 protects access to evidence-based health care in Oregon, including the rights of all Oregonians to make personal medical decisions with their physician, without government interference. As federal and out-of-state threats escalate, Oregon has a responsibility to protect its providers' ability to practice medicine and protect personally identifiable patient data and identity records. I urge you to vote YES on HB 4088 to protect patients, providers, and privacy in Oregon. Thank you for your time, service, and commitment to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely, Holly from Tigard Oregon.