

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

My name is Casey Deck. I live in Portland, Oregon. I am here today in strong support for HB 4088. I know firsthand how important LGBTQ+ health care is because I am the proud father of an amazing transgender teenager. Because of the gender affirming care my child has received, he is absolutely thriving as a happy, deep thinking, creative, hard working high schooler.

Our experience is much like other families supporting their gender expansive kids, watching them thrive after accessing this life saving healthcare. As Oregonians we are so fortunate that gender affirming care has been available for our child. An immense amount of care from our doctors, mental health professionals and deeply supportive staff has helped our child to thrive. It has been a long journey, but we see first hand how life saving this health care is. Before our child began gender affirming care he suffered severe distress and struggled to attend school, play with friends, or even be out in public. As his care team provided this evidence based healthcare, we have witnessed the most beautiful transformation. Our son has blossomed into the happiest, most self assured kid we could have ever imagined. It has easily been one of the most important and special parts of our parenting journey.

Unfortunately, last year for the first time we personally experienced barriers to accessing this care for our child. Due to threats of surveillance and investigation by the federal government, our provider notified us that they were no longer able to provide care for our child. It was shocking and frightening to learn our child had lost his healthcare and could suffer because of it. Particularly because this healthcare is entirely legal in the state of Oregon. Our family deeply trusts our doctors and it is infuriating to see them threatened to the point they are forced to close their doors. I am far from alone in experiencing loss of healthcare for my trans child. My time facilitating parent support groups largely consists of fearful conversations around this issue. I have spoken to other parents in Oregon who share that despite it being within the law, they have also lost their children's healthcare. Our families desperately need this bill because Health Care is a Human Right: Everyone deserves access to medically necessary care, free from interference, stigma, or surveillance. 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.