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January 30, 2026

Oregon Senate Committee

Senate Committee Services

900 Court St NE

Salem, OR 97301

Sent via online portal

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on your currently-considered bill, Senate Bill 1571. The LGBTQIA+ Cancer Network works to improve the lives of cancer survivors and those at risk by: 1) educating the community about our increased cancer risks and the importance of screening and early detection; 2) training health care providers to offer more culturally-competent, safe and welcoming care; and 3) advocating for LGBTQIA+ survivors and communities regarding issues of health and quality of life as they relate to cancer risk. It is under the auspices of this third prong of our mission that we write to you today.

The LGBTQIA+ Cancer Network urges the House Committee on Finance to advance SB 1571 in its current form, as a bill designed to increase legal scrutiny of tobacco and nicotine products.

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**A. LGBTQIA+ Tobacco Product Use Disparities**



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The disparities in smokeless product and other tobacco product use among LGBTQIA+ communities, young people, and communities of color are stark and urgent. Our current understanding of LGBTQIA+ tobacco use disparities is the culmination of decades of research and advancement of public health, both nationally and in Oregon specifically.

## **1. Overview of LGBTQI+ Presence in Washington**

The Williams Institute estimates that [5.6% of Oregon residents identify as LGBTQIA+](#), making it the most populous state in the country for LGBTQIA+ communities. Members of LGBTQIA+ communities are particularly represented among younger generations, with a full third of Oregon's LGBTQIA+ population between the ages of 18 and 24.

## **2. Overview of LGBTQIA+ Use Disparities**

The age demographic discussed above is important to understand, because studies show that [LGBTQIA+ young adults](#) use [both tobacco products and tobacco substitutes](#) at higher rates than their peers, and their peers are already using these products at high rates. A recent data brief from the CDC Foundation reports that use of nicotine pouches among adolescents in the United States has [increased by 250.8%](#) between 2023 and 2025. This is particularly concerning as 2023 data already suggested that [rates of tobacco use are rising among middle schoolers](#) in general. These phenomena are related, as recent studies also suggest that users of nicotine pouches often [also use other tobacco products](#) concurrently.

Against this backdrop, LGBTQIA+ individuals use these products at even higher rates. A 2022 national survey which gathered sexual orientation and gender identity information indicates that [sexual minority middle schoolers are twice as likely](#) to use tobacco, while [transgender middle schoolers are three times more likely](#). A 2015-2016 study also found that [transgender individuals are over 3.5 times more likely to be using smokeless tobacco](#) than cisgender individuals. Studies suggest that use disparities continue with nicotine pouches. One 2023 study found higher susceptibility to non-combustible tobacco use in [all types of sexual minority youth](#) except asexual youth.

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Although research consistently shows that [smoking increases anxiety and tension](#), communities of color and LGBTQIA+ populations are [targets of aggressive marketing](#) that portrays tobacco as a coping mechanism for stress. As part of this targeting, companies often offer free samples, discounts, and coupons to LGBTQIA+ individuals and Black individuals specifically, through both everyday marketing and identity-related festivals such as Pride festivals and Jazz festivals. This exacerbates use disparities, as it can be a particularly effective pathway to addiction.

This targeting is, of course, always combined with a massive spike in minority stress—chronic stress due to social stigmatization, discrimination, and marginalization—which leads to detrimental health outcomes. For communities of color and LGBTQIA+ individuals, minority stress is compounded by discriminatory laws and policies. Such discriminatory policies are becoming more numerous every day at the federal level, and overall stress for these populations is unquestionably rising. For many LGBTQIA+ people, tobacco product use is rising as well.

### **3. Intersection of Race and LGBTQIA+ Identity**

The disparate tobacco use described above increases even further when factors like race, gender identity, and sexual orientation intersect, as heightened stress and targeted marketing towards these marginalized groups makes rates higher in communities of color as well. For example, national research in 2021 shows that [about 3.1% of non-Hispanic Black youth were using tobacco products, compared to 1.4% of their non-Hispanic White counterparts](#).

According to nationally representative data, LGBT, Black, and Hispanic adolescents are [more likely to engage with at least one form of online tobacco marketing compared to heterosexual and White counterparts](#), increasing their risk of initiating tobacco use.

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The addition to definitions under section 1 of SB 1571 is therefore particularly appreciated against this backdrop; it will add restrictions on the sale of smokeless tobacco products which are disproportionately used by the LGBTQIA+ community.

### **C. Conclusion**

Even at the best of times, responsible laws regarding definitions of tobacco products are one thread in a much larger tapestry. In these difficult times of increased need, creating systems that offer robust community support is essential. Including oral tobacco such as nicotine pouches to restrictions regarding sale, however, is a very necessary first step.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill, which will improve health outcomes and reduce cancer rates for LGBTQIA+ Washington residents of all ages. SB 1571 contains extremely important provisions, and we sincerely hope you will adopt it in its entirety.

Sincerely,

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