



June 8, 2017

Co-Chairs Steiner Hayward and Rayfield and members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services:

On behalf of the Basic Rights Oregon, we respectfully request your support for SB 512A, a bill that updates Oregon's parentage statutes to better protect all children and families.

Basic Rights Oregon works to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Oregonians experience lived equality. Through the decades, state and federal laws have been updated to reflect the changing realities of how families form, live, care for each other, and even separate. Despite the progress we've made in Oregon to recognize loving and committed LGBTQ couples and their families, some significant barriers remain.

SB 512A updates Oregon's family law statutes related to parentage with gender neutral language that more accurately reflects the diversity of today's modern families—regardless of the parents' marital status, sexual orientation or gender identity. This is very important especially in second parent adoption, as legal experts still strongly encourage LGBTQ parents who are not biologically related to their children to legally adopt them in order to ensure there are no parental rights issues.

Basic Rights Oregon works with several attorneys who specialize in family formation law and have a significant number of clients who are members of our community. They have expressed the need for this legislation and these changes to address problems they see in their practices. Complex legal circumstances can arise due to death or divorce and this bill will help ensure that people with established parental relationships are treated fairly. We need to make sure Oregon's laws keep pace with reproductive technology changes and our changing modern families. These updates are important because they protect children and families by ensuring that our laws reflect the lived realities of diverse families throughout Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring forward this bill and we urge your support of SB 512A.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "Nancy Haque" and the second is "Amy Herzfeld-Copple".

Nancy Haque & Amy Herzfeld-Copple
Co-Executive Directors