



April 20, 2021

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

We at Basic Rights Oregon are writing to urge support for House Bill 2583A. We are the leading LGBTQ advocacy group in Oregon, and recognize how our community members are impacted when definitions of "family" in statute exclude the many, diverse ways that people make their own families.

That's why this very simple, bipartisan bill is so important, as it would echo legislation in other states by removing zoning codes' definition of who does and doesn't count as a "family."

Building and fire codes would still be able to set safety-based standards for the number of occupants per building. Landlords would still be able to turn down rental applications based on number of residents (subject to the separate restrictions in existing fair housing laws). But these rules would now be applied equally whether or not a city recognizes the relations of Oregonians sharing a house as "familial."

Arbitrary limits on "non-familial" or "unrelated" occupants harm all Oregonians by making it illegal to share our existing housing stock, forcing homeseekers to compete for an artificially smaller number of bedrooms and limiting the ability of multiple households to save money by sharing the same house. They particularly harm Oregonians interested in living in households that wouldn't have been recognized as legitimate "family" by politicians in the 1920s, when these rules began to be written into local zoning codes.

As we have seen throughout decades of our work and life, the LGBTQ community makes our own diverse families through both blood and affinity, and it's important that our laws reflect this.

Please follow the example of Iowa, Washington, California, New York, New Jersey and Michigan by ending these wasteful, discriminatory rules and pass HB 2583A.

Thank you for your time and consideration.