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House Majority Office

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Democratic Leaders Introduce Expanded Equal Rights Constitutional Referral

Senate Joint Resolution 33 will give voters the power to safeguard equal rights, including the right to contraception, abortion, and marriage equality in Oregon's Constitution

SALEM, Ore. - Today, Senate Joint Resolution 33 was introduced in the Oregon Senate. SJR 33 will give the voters of Oregon the opportunity to preserve equal rights protections in Oregon's constitution during the 2024 General Election. If passed, this amendment would protect Oregonians' freedom and rights to make their own decisions about their own bodies and families, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity – including the right to access health care including contraception and abortion.

This constitutional amendment comes in response to last year's Supreme Court *Dobbs* decision that went against half a century of legal precedent and repealed a person's constitutional right to an abortion under *Roe v. Wade*. This unprecedented decision has also placed other fundamental freedoms at risk, leaving it up to states to protect their people's rights.

Notably, if passed at the ballot, this legislation will also enshrine a person's right to marry who they love and repeal Oregon's ban on same gender marriage from the state constitution.

SJR 33 will give Oregon voters the power to respond to growing threats from anti-LGBTQ, anti-abortion, and anti-freedom politicians advancing their agendas at the state and federal level.

"As the only LGBTQ member in the Senate, this bill is personal. I know how it feels to live somewhere that doesn't accept you for who you are. From bans on abortion to bans on medical

care for transgender people, hate is on the rise across the country, and this is Oregon's opportunity to respond with hope," **said [Senate Majority Leader Kate Lieber](#) (D – Beaverton & SW Portland).** "We can make Oregon a healthier, safer, and more just place for everyone, and I could not be more proud to take part in this effort."

"Every person should be free to make their own decisions about their own bodies, without political interference," **said [House Majority Leader Julie Fahey](#) (D-West Eugene & Veneta)**. "As red states criminalize basic health care and fundamental rights, here in Oregon, we are working to protect those rights."

Lawmakers note that SJR 33 will promote healthier, safer communities, and encourage growth: [More than half of young people](#) say states' abortion laws will impact where they choose to put down roots, and college students are gravitating [towards states](#) that protect LGBTQ rights.

In addition to SJR 33, Democrats are also taking action this session to protect bodily autonomy through the Reproductive Health & Access to Care bill (HB 2002), ensuring no politician can interfere in the medical decisions made between a patient and provider. To address urgent needs in response to *Dobbs* decision, this legislation will:
- Protect providers' ability to deliver care to all patients who seek gender-affirming and reproductive health care in Oregon -- without political interference.
- Expand healthcare access specifically for the Oregonians who need it most.

This marks a critical moment in Oregon's proud history of protecting the right to make deeply personal decisions without political interference.

In 2017, Democrats passed the Reproductive Health Equity Act (RHEA), which codified the right to an abortion in state law and made the full range of reproductive health care more affordable and accessible for all Oregonians.

Last year, the legislature established the Oregon Reproductive Health Equity Fund, a $15 million dollar investment in abortion access which expanded provider capacity across the state and supported those seeking abortion care in Oregon following the Supreme Court's repeal of *Roe v Wade*.

SJR 33 will be referred to the Senate President's office for a committee assignment.

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