

Iris Walter  
Portland  
LD 1899

My name is Iris Walter and I am here today to share my experience and express my support of LD 1899, An Act to Ensure Safe Entry and Access for People Seeking Health Care and Other Constitutional Rights.

I'm here today in support of LD 1899 because I volunteered as a greeter at the Portland Planned Parenthood Health Center in the Summer of 2020, and I was present during countless anti-abortion protests that occurred in front of the health center.

Patients arriving at the health center were often visibly upset, because they had to walk through a large group of protesters who were often saying hurtful things. Protesters stood very close to the door, which essentially hindered their access to important health care, and made them feel unsafe while doing so. For many weeks, we had to call the police when protesters got too loud, until we eventually had a police officer stay with the volunteers every week.

We did the best that we could to make patients feel welcome at the health center once they got past the protesters, but it was clear that their experience was made much worse by these protesters.

Seeking medical care can be hard and we don't know how patients are feeling before they even get to the health center. And, having that day be made even worse by unsafe entry and access has the potential to turn patients away from receiving the health care they need.

No matter what, everyone has the same right to health care, and access to that health care should not be unsafe. Patients of Planned Parenthood need safe entry and access to health care. Please support LD 1899. Thank You.