



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

**Department of Human Services**  
*Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services*  
*Advisory Committee*  
500 Summer St NE, E-10  
Salem, OR 97301  
Voice - 971-301-1618  
Voice/TTY: 1-800-282-8096

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Sara Gelser,  
Chair, Senate Human Services and  
Early Childhood Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301



RE: Senate Bill 449

Dear Senator Gelser and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Advisory Committee (ODHHS A/C), we are pleased to submit this letter of support for passage of SB449.

It is the emphatic recommendation of this committee that the Oregon State Legislature pass SB 449 which would require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a *permanent* Office for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard-of-Hearing Services (ODDBHHS) to provide services to Oregonians statewide.

Established under ORS 410.740, the ODHHS Advisory Committee consists of stakeholders from the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf-Blind, sign language interpreting, and Deaf educational communities, as well as members of state government agencies and those who run current programs benefiting Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf-Blind individuals.

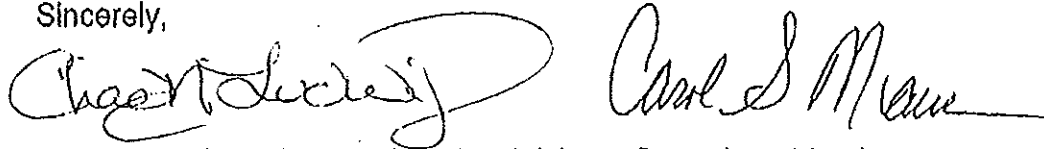
It is our fervent hope that establishment of a permanent office providing a wealth of services to this underserved population. Senate Bill 449 would ultimately assist in developing many more willing and capable tax-paying citizens by providing services to the over 186,000 Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard-of-Hearing individuals in our state. These include increased access to employment opportunities and access to programs such as alcohol and drug treatment, mental health services, and job training programs.

Current state law (ORS 410.740) does not require DHS to provide these services despite recommendations of its advisory committee to do so. Our goal is to see Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard-of-Hearing Oregonians have *permanent* access to the services they might need to surmount challenges they face and become empowered, contributing members of society. We believe SB449 represents great progress towards that goal.

*"Safety, health and independence for all Oregonians"*  
An Equal Opportunity Employer

The ODHHS Advisory Committee therefore urges the Oregon State Legislature to pass SB 449 and establish this new, permanent office. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or wish to discuss this topic further.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Chad A. Ludwig and Carol S. Mauser. The signature of Chad A. Ludwig is on the left, and the signature of Carol S. Mauser is on the right.

Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee Members  
Chad A. Ludwig and Carol S. Mauser, Co-Chairs