

16, March 2015

The Honor Senator Chip Shields

900 Court St. NE, S-421,

Salem, Oregon 97301

503-986-1722

Greeting, Senator Shields:

Regarding SB-5534, I attended the joint committee meeting which you had co-chaired with Representative Jennifer Williamson on the date of 16th of February, 2015.

My name is Dean Gabel, a long-time Oregon citizen and a Deaf person.

Currently I am on the advisory council of Oregon Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Services (ODHHS) under the Department of Human Services (DHS), and am also a part of the subcommittee on Police and Prisons involving education when serving the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing.

Due to short notice, there was inadequate time to secure a sign language interpreter, thus during the joint committee meeting, I read what was presented on the screen. I obtained limited information that day.

Senator Shields, the intention of my attendance was to inquire about that bill, SB 5534 and, if necessary, I would have testified and requested to amend the same bill to provide funding for additional training for law enforcement officers who encounter Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing people in the public.

The reasons I propose an amendment to the budget are listed below:

1. For decades there have been relationship issues between law enforcement officers and Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing citizens. Misinterpretations, misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication have led to complaints being filed against police departments for negligence and ignorance of civil rights entitled to Deaf/DeafBlind and Hard-of-Hearing citizens. In the most tragic situations, Deaf citizens have been killed due to the inability to hear and respond to law enforcement directions or because they were reaching for pen and paper to write; these tragedies can easily be prevented.
2. ODHHS plans to recommend educational materials and trainings to be provided to law enforcement agencies. Workshops would be provided on an annual basis.

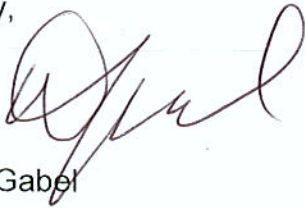
I believe that this additional training would be much appreciated by the academy and current police officers because over many decades they have not been given adequate guidance when working with Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing individuals.

Moreover, ODHHS A/C will initiate a project for creating a 'comprehensive and standardized' curriculum to be provided to police academies and to establish annual workshops. Our goal is to establish a bridge between the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing communities and our police and prisons in the State of Oregon—that is, to better the relationship between the two.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me or the Oregon Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Services Advisory Council.

Thank you, Senator Shields, for taking your time in considering a proposal for an amendment to the ten-year plan for police training.

Sincerely,



Dean J. Gabel

Oregon Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Services' Advisory Council

Subcommittee on Police and Prisons, ODHHS A/C

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