

Mitchel B. Turbin PhD  
Testimony on SB 1018/1023  
March 29, 2017

I want to thank my Oregon State Legislators for allowing me to testify on Senate Bills 1018 and 1023. My name is Dr. Mitch Turbin. I have a PhD from the University of Oregon and retired recently as a Research Psychologist at the VA National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research at the Portland VA. I also have Usher Syndrome Type 3, with lifelong progressive losses of vision and hearing and now use a wide range of hearing assistance and low vision technology. I have a long career as a professional and a consumer advocate and have chaired the Oregon Deaf-Blind Services Task Force for the past five years...

I would like to enthusiastically support SB 1018 and 1023 but at the present time I cannot. The recent Community Needs Assessment conducted by Western Oregon University (on whose advisory board I served) supports what we advocates stated last session when we pushed for SB 449 to establish centers for direct services to Oregonians who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or have hearing loss and additional disabilities. However, the communication modalities and needed services of our groups differ. And ah, there's the rub.

Despite numerous meetings and shared events in which our diverse group of stakeholders agreed to partner equally and mutually support our different communication and other issues, the Request for Proposals to establish the CNA let us down. The RFP lacked accurate, comprehensive attention to those who have hearing loss but are not deaf. Dr. Hackett and Dr. Davis of Western Oregon University did their best to compensate for those errors and I applaud their work.

Alas, we see the same thing happening with SB 1018, and thus I have serious reservations about it. We've been told there will be amendments. I can no longer depend on promises, as I feel that promises have been broken. I will support these bills when I see real improvements, or I will oppose them.

In order to gain my support, SB 1018 must, at the least:

1. Adequately and comprehensively address the full range of communication and other services for the whole group of people with hearing loss, not just ASL interpreters for the Deaf.
2. A more balanced Advisory Council must be assembled. Better balance among disability groups and also inclusion of qualified professionals with experience in direct services, including administration and research.
3. Per SB 1023—what is this money going to be used for? Are core RSPF and TDAP services going to be impacted? Which professionals will administer and supervise this new DHS program? How much money goes to the Advisory Council?

Again, thank you for this opportunity. I have conveyed other specific suggestions to Senator Monnes Anderson and am available to answer any questions you may have today or in the future at [mitchturbin@gmail.com](mailto:mitchturbin@gmail.com) or by phone at 503-618-0207.