

Public Comments SB 1023

My name is Clark Anderson. I am retired from work in hospital/health care administration and have a Ph.D. and an MBA. I am a member of ODHHS-Advisory Committee. I am also the President of two organizations that have the goal of meeting or advocating for the needs of the hard of hearing: Hearing Loss Association of Oregon and Oregon Communication Access Project which together represent hundreds of hard of hearing people.

I identify as being hard of hearing, having had a progressive hearing loss and want to be able to communicate with the greater hearing population as well as with other hard of hearing individuals who rarely understand sign language interpreting. When hearing aids no longer worked for me I got two cochlear implants. Even with these devices I have difficulty understanding speech without assistive technology and/or captioning.

My comments follow.

1. Section 1 et seq. Use of the disability category "Deaf-Blind" should be assumed under the category Deaf and, furthermore, if retained, there should be a separate category "Hard of Hearing-Blind. Keep in mind that the Hard of Hearing, at 94%, far outnumbers the Deaf/deaf at 6% of the hearing disabled population. Therefore it is most likely that the hard of hearing-blind would outnumber those who are Deaf-Blind.
2. Section 2
 - *As written: Upon collecting surcharge moneys pursuant to section 7, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, the Public Utility Commission shall transfer _____ percent of the moneys to the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Fund established under section 1 of this 2017*
 - Comments:
 - I don't see any value to the movement of funds from the PUC to a Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Fund. I oppose this transfer if, for any reason, it would jeopardize the PUC being unable to effectively administer the TDAP program. I think that the PUC should continue to administer the TDAP program and, my and others' experience with TDAP think the PUC has done a good job.
 - The percentage is undefined, could range from 0-100% and its use is not specified; the higher the percentage, the greater the impact of the PUC.
 - There is nothing to prevent these funds to be diverted from existing PUC programs.
 - I and many other hard of hearing people have benefited from this program and there is no guarantee that the administration of the TDAP program would benefit from a change in administration.

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Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

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