



April 3, 2017

TO: Senator Chuck Riley, Chair
Senate Committee on General Government and Accountability
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: SB 829

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is Oregon's federally-funded *Protection and Advocacy* office that provides legal-based advocacy services to Oregonians with disabilities. DRO strongly supports SB 829.

In our view, SB 829 is merely directing the state to follow its own laws. These are:

ORS 659A.103 (1) It is declared to be the public policy of Oregon to guarantee individuals the fullest possible participation in the social and economic life of the state, to engage in remunerative employment, to use and enjoy places of public accommodation, resort or amusement, to participate in and receive the benefits of the services, programs and activities of state government and to secure housing accommodations of their choice, without discrimination on the basis of disability.

(2) The guarantees expressed in subsection (1) of this section are hereby declared to be the policy of the State of Oregon to protect, and ORS 659A.103 to 659A.145 shall be construed to effectuate such policy.

ORS 659A.142 (5)(a) It is an unlawful practice for state government to exclude an individual from participation in or deny an individual the benefits of the services, programs or activities of state government or to make any distinction, discrimination or restriction because the individual has a disability.

No individual or group of citizens should be effectively excluded from participating in the civic life of our state based upon their disability. This is presently what is happening for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Please act to end this discriminatory practice.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 829.