



Dear Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs McLane and Rayfield and members of the committee,

Thank you, for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3397, a bill to provide language translation services for those wishing to participate in our democratic process that may not otherwise have access.

Oregon AFSCME Council 75's membership is diverse and we know that when we are able to provide more opportunities for people to participate in our processes, we'll be stronger for it. Last legislative session, one of our child care providers came to give testimony on a bill focused on Employment Related Day Care. Her native language is Spanish, and while bilingual, prefers to be able to speak in Spanish in more formal settings. She is able to respond more quickly and accurately when she doesn't have to make the translation herself. We worked with staff in Speaker Kotek's office to arrange for translation services, not realizing that the request was something that wasn't provided. The speaker's staff was able to find a volunteer, a staff person in legislative counsel, who could help. The volunteer wasn't a trained translator, but she and our child care provider were able to sit together to discuss the testimony and the issue for a few minutes before the meeting and the testimony went well.

This kind of service should be something that is readily available for all who need translation services. Participation from the public is key and only having the perspective of those who communicate through speaking English, limits who gets to share their stories and the impacts of the work we do at the legislature.

AFSCME urges your support for HB 3397 and making our legislative process more inclusive for those who may need translation services no matter what the language barrier may be.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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