

OPENING REMARKS

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Amanda Wheeler-Kay. I am a Certified Health Care Interpreter in English and Spanish and am also a member of the Oregon Council on Health Care Interpreters.

On behalf of myself and the other panelists, we would like to thank Chair Salinas and her staff for their support and efforts which have given us the opportunity to speak with you all today. With that, I would like to turn it over to our first panelist.

TESTIMONY

Again, my name is Amanda Wheeler-Kay. It is difficult to speak to the significance of this legislation in such limited time. In addition to the points my fellow panelists have mentioned, I would add the following.

Interpreters and LEPs need meaningful ways to participate in decisions that impact our health, well-being and livelihood. Two examples illustrate both efforts towards this end, and room for improvement.

First, Chair Salinas has solicited input from interpreters, and it has been an honor to be able to give input on this bill and its predecessor. In that time I have flinched every time I read in the bill or hear a person speak of “using” interpreters.

To my dismay, this language persists in this legislative concept, despite repeated requests to change this to “work with” interpreters.

And secondly, the logistics of tonight’s interpretation mean that the panelists have less time to make our remarks. There is a way to provide simultaneous interpretation in a virtual meeting, but there wasn’t any opportunity for those of us in this profession to provide input on this logistical element.

I say this with all due respect to the interpreter, Norma Rubi, thank you.

Also, the fact that there wasn't any adjustment for the additional time it takes for consecutive interpreting is a concrete example of the inequities inherent in the participation of limited-English proficient individuals in these processes.

Meaningful participation requires thoughtful accommodations.

This bill gives us the opportunity to do something concrete to interrupt the system of oppression, and racism for the limited English speakers and people of color in Oregon.

I look forward to future opportunities to delve into the importance of this legislation with you all. Thank you.