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Dear Chair of the Senate Committee on Education:

As a resident of the state of Oregon, I am writing in support of SB: 13 which changes terminology for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing in special education statutes. Our current special education statutes use outdated terminology that many who identify as deaf and hard of hearing find offensive. This bill would update the language of special education statutes to use “deaf and hard of hearing,” the preferred terminology of this group, and the term used by many organizations that seek to represent deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

As a speech and language pathologist with typical hearing who works exclusively with children who are deaf and hard of hearing to help them develop their listening and spoken language skills, I do my best to use preferred terminology accepted by the children and families with whom I work. I do not always get it right, but I am willing to acknowledge when I do not and make a change. Throughout history, there have been many terms used to describe individuals with differing abilities that we no longer use because we have realized they are inaccurate and/or hurtful. We have the opportunity to change the language of our statutes to correct this and have the language be reflective of the current time. When we change the language of this law, we will support the growing conversation in our state, nation, and world about the words that we use and how they impact people.

Thank you for considering this bill. Your support of individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

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