

Hello,

My name is JennyLynn Dietrich, I would very much like to testify supporting having a Communication Facilitation program set up here in the state of Oregon in person but unfortunately my employment does not allow me to represent my community during office hours. I am referring to HB 3205.

I am DeafBlind, I do not use the program, however I have seen how it does benefit individuals who can't see the video screen at all and how much autonomy they received when they have someone relaying what is seen on the screen to the DB individual. As you know the Deaf community uses Videophones to call each other or to make phone call on a daily basis. The FCC made it accessible to them, however it is not accessible to those who can't see the video screen at all.

Washington is the only state that has this program. You can set the screen to be at a local DHS office or agency OR set it up to be mobile where the facilitator can visit the individuals' home. Not only would this help DeafBlind people make phone calls on a day to day basis, this would open employment opportunity to Deaf Vendors or contractors.

Basically a person with fluency in American Sign Language (CF) would sit next to the DeafBlind person, the DB person provides the phone number to call. The call is processed as you would call a friend or whatever and then the Communication Facilitator (CF) would copy the person's signing on the screen to the DB person verbatim. Then the DB person would respond to the signer on the screen and then a phone call has been conducted.

Training will be needed and emphasis on confidentiality, boundaries and professionalism. How to process the call and at the same time honoring the facilitator's need for breaks in between calls especially when Tactile American Sign Language (TASL) is being used.

With the Protactile House being based in Monmouth, OR there's no telling how many DB people will want to move here. I do know that when my friends come visit they always talk about wanting to live here but resources for the DB community is almost next to nothing.

Thank you for your time in reviewing this letter, please say yes to HB 3205 so that my friends within the DB community who can't see can call their families with a CF to tell them they love them and can't communicate their day to day events.

Respectfully yours,

JennyLynn Dietrich