

Dear Oregon Legislature and Whom May Be Concerned,

I am writing you this in support of both bills SB 795 and HB 3205 to strengthen us as a united people in the state of Oregon.

Bill SB 795 ensures that the Oregon Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (ODHHS) program becomes a permanent part of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to serve the population of Deaf and Hard of Hearing in equitable ways. This must happen no matter what because ODHHS will be a very invaluable program for DHS and the state of Oregon. Oregon must make the room for ODHHS even if there is none. Urgently. Furthermore, it is very ethical to realize or admit to a limitation in competencies and to refer to more competent and qualified professionals in service through this DHS program under American Psychological Association under the ethical conduct code 2.01 ([Boundaries of Competency](#)). Ignoring this permanent need for ODHHS consequently causes more harm than good. The reality is that being deaf will never ever go away or be cured even with medical and educational interventions as long as there are entities that don't make the room for diversity in Oregon from lack of experience, awareness, resources, and education.

Bill HB 3205 ensures that the DeafBlind Oregonians have Communication Facilitator (CF) services. As you know, many DeafBlind residents are not able to enjoy using phones just as a lot of us with sighted privileges do. The Deaf and Hard of hearing enjoy Videophone calls due to having vision. The hearing people can make phone calls and even enjoy more privileges. Blind people with hearing still can use phone calls independently, but DeafBlind people cannot. A lot of the Deaf people that are going blind late are very scared of losing the privilege of relying on their vision.

We must not leave out anyone for proper diversity representation in our state government in the category of Oregonians with disabilities. Vulnerable Oregonians and their children pay the price when there is not enough diverse representation and competencies of their interests in the state. Disability has been long overlooked because that experience is very different, little understood, and still has a significant impact on the cultures and linguistic experiences of all those involved.

I voted in Oregon and I am deaf, so I absolutely deserve both of these bills to pass in my community. I will never go away and neither will others that are also DHH and DeafBlind. Barriers hurt. Not having access hurts.

Thank you for reading!

Thank you and warm regards,

Elizabeth [REDACTED] D [REDACTED]