

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Bill 2359. I strongly support the content of this Bill because if implemented these changes would be beneficial not only for the Interpreters but the whole community involved in the medical field.

First, I would like to share my experience as a Medical Interpreter with you: I am an Italian native speaker, I relocated in Portland in 2011 where I live with my husband, who is a Faculty Professor at PSU and our two children. I am a US citizen since 2015. Before I moved in the US I worked as a Civil Lawyer in my country.

Currently I work as an independent contractor/ over the phone interpreter, Trainer / In Language Facilitator for Italian.

Since I decide to invest my future in this career , I worked hard in order to get Qualified with the Oregon Health Authority. However, recently the language company "P." send me for an assignment at hospital "O." at the appointment I found the patient was accompanied by her husband who spoke currently English and Italian. During the appointment the husband had been the whole time at my side listening to everything the interpreter was relating to the doctor, at the end of the appointment the husband said this to me : " Now that I know in the future you will assist my wife with her doctor appointments, I don't need to accompany her anymore. Indeed, in the past the hospital provided interpreter who weren't Italian native speaker and were unable to communicate with my wife." Despite that, company "P." prefers to assign appointment for "Italian" to other interpreters who aren't qualified in Italian.

Interpreters are not motivated in getting Qualified/ Certified because Language services prefers assign appointment to interpreters who aren't Qualified/ Certified because they get a lower rate. Since, I got my Qualification in 2019 I received less and less assignments from Language services in Portland.

Also, I would reiterate my frustration about this unfair system of Qualification because my language is only "Qualifiable" not "Certifiable". This is an injustice operated by the system as a result despite my experience at the moment I don't get to be Certified, consequently I won't be entitled to the hourly rates of Certified interpreters.

Moreover, Interpreters aren't entitle to a two hours minimum appointments as a results often I must turn down appointments because the money I would earn wouldn't be enough to cover the expenses of my children's babysitter. This unfair setting create the condition for an additional situation of inequality for working women/mothers like me.

Interpreters aren't treated in the same way as all the other professionals in Oregon, and excluded from workers comp benefits. The category of interpreters is in a Limbo land, a clarification is needed regarding what is an independent contractor and what is an employee. Today's law states that interpreters who work for a language company are neither contractors nor employees, but this exemption was not passed with the support of the interpreters in the first place, there was not consultations with the category of interpreters.

Yet, this is another example of how discriminated and mistreated our category is.

What I mostly love of this job is the opportunity to help other people who aren't proficient in English, change are needed in this field in order to motivate future prospective interpreters in investing in this profession.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Kind regards, Sonia Landi- Qualified Medical Interpreter for Italian