

Hello!

My name is Anette and I have been an RID certified ASL interpreter for over 15 years. Having been in this profession for this long, I have personally seen the impact of uncertified interpreters providing subpar, or worse, terrible interpreting services to the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing community in Oregon. This community deserves qualified, certified ASL interpreters and to stop allowing those who are not certified or qualified to continue working until they get the proper certifications to show they meet the minimum requirements to provide services. This has deeply affected the Deaf/DB/HH community and has cause harm in a multitude of ways.

HB3231 will protect the more than 180,000 Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians in our state by establishing a licensure requirement for Sign Language interpreters. Currently in Oregon, anyone can legally represent themselves as a Sign Language interpreter whether or not they are qualified and provide services in settings such as emergency press-conferences, drug treatment facilities, or attorney-client meetings. This results in unqualified or unethical interpreting services, violating the rights of Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians and potentially causing great harm to consumers. Along with the risk to the consumers, hiring entities including government agencies are at risk of lawsuits if they hire interpreters who are unqualified.

HB3231 will create a State Board of Sign Language Interpreters within Oregon Health Authority, outline requirements for interpreter licensure and establish standards for the profession. It will also protect consumers and hiring entities by requiring licensure to work as a Sign Language interpreter in Oregon. Over 30 states have established such requirements for Sign Language interpreters and the passing of this bill would ensure Oregon is in line with national best practices.

I respectfully ask for the Committee's support of HB3231 the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill because this law will protect the rights of Oregon's Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing citizens.

Respectfully,  
Anette H.