

February 13, 2021

Representative Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Behavioral Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Sanchez, and the Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health Care,

I support the passage of House Bill 2585. The State of Oregon suffers from a chronic need for provision of access to communication and education to Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians with mental health needs. These services would make the lives of this population functionally equivalent to that of the rest of Oregon's citizens. Currently Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians with mental health needs are disadvantaged by structural barriers that HB 2585 would begin to remove.

As a Sign Language Interpreter and an ally to the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing communities, I have seen time and time again where members of these communities have gone without services or equivalent services to their fellow Oregonians.

Supporting HB 2585 is an opportunity for Oregon's leadership to empower Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing by granting access to the functionally equivalent mental health services that they deserve.

Sincerely,

Brandon Heaps
1476 NE Redspire Lane
Hillsboro, OR 97124

cc: Oregon Association of the Deaf, Inc.
File