

Sen. Kathleen Taylor  
Senate Committee on Labor and Business  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

January 27, 2022

SUBJECT: Support for 1562, the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill

To the Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to urge this Committee to support SB 1562.

My name is Brandon Heaps. I am a Sign Language Interpreter, as well as a hiring entity, and I am writing to urge the Committee's support of SB1562.

SB1562 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, regardless if they are qualified. 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.

SB1562 will create a State Board of Sign Language Interpreters within Oregon Health Authority, outline requirements for interpreter licensure and establish standards for the profession. Over 30 states have established such requirements and the passing of this bill would ensure Oregon is advancing in line with national standards.

My first encounter with a Deaf person was my freshman year of college. Throughout this ongoing relationship, I see the barriers he faces daily, and one of those barriers is unqualified "interpreters." Seeing this first hand led me to pursue a career in sign language interpreting, and now own and operate Mosaic Interpreting, LLC. As a hiring entity and professional Sign Language Interpreter, I am in support of SB1562.

Sincerely,

Brandon Heaps  
Mosaic Interpreting, LLC  
PO Box 6823

Portland, OR 97228