

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 Esteemed Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the Committee:
I am writing to urge this Committee to support SB 1562.

My name is Felicity Ratway. I have been a health care interpreter in Oregon since 2015. I have a Master's degree in Interpreting and Translation Studies, I am certified through OHA and NBCMI as a Spanish interpreter.

While I don't sign well enough to interpret between ASL and English, I know how great of an impact lack of access can have on the Deaf community.

I am writing to urge your support of SB1562 because this bill would allow for the enforcement of existing law protecting Oregonians' right to access credentialed interpreters in the medical, legal, and educational settings.

Oregonians who communicate through signed languages deserve the same access to important services as those who communicate through spoken languages. They have the right to equal access under the ADA, ORS 413.552, and other existing legislation, but too often are served by interpreters who have not demonstrated competency. Oregon has already set standards for competency for sign language interpreters. This bill would ensure that interpreters in Oregon meet those standards to work in the field, improving the quality of language access services.

Best,

Felicity Ratway