



# Northwest Regional Education Service District

**Laurie Harrison, Ed.D.**  
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To: Members of the Oregon State Legislature

From: Laurie Harrison, Administrator of Deaf/HH Services  
Northwest Regional Education Service District

Re: HB 2664

Date: January 31, 2023

I am writing to express my support for HB 2664, the Bill of Rights for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Foster Children. As both a hard of hearing individual and one who volunteers as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) I have seen firsthand some of the limitations within the Department of Human Services to provide adequate services for hearing children within the foster care system. As a professional within the field of deafness, I am aware of even greater challenges in meeting the needs of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children who are in foster care, despite the best efforts of DHS.

Children who are in the foster system and who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing have unique language and cultural needs that can easily go unnoticed by those who do not have access to the knowledge of professionals who are invested in Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing cultures and communication modalities. Children may not have the language to advocate for their own needs; therefore, it is imperative that Oregon establish a Bill of Rights for these populations.

A Bill of Rights would help to ensure that children who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing receive care that includes appropriate access to their native language and equal access to the crucial information that would be provided to their typically-hearing peers. This Bill of Rights would provide a central location for support and resources for the Department of Human Services and those caring for these populations of children. Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing children need equal and appropriate access to child welfare, legal, medical, psychological, educational, and mental health services, and this bill will see to it that DHS has the support they need to provide them.

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I am happy to answer any questions or to provide any additional thoughts regarding HB 2664 and can be reached at 503-614-1350 or via email at [lharrison@nwresd.k12.or.us](mailto:lharrison@nwresd.k12.or.us).

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Laurie Harrison, Ed.D.  
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