

**DEB PATTERSON
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL
DISTRICT/DISTRITO 10**



OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Nguyen and Scharf and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Deb Patterson, State Senator from District 10, representing South Salem, West Salem, Monmouth and Independence. I am writing to add my support to HB 2664 which will provide culturally and linguistically affirmative child welfare services to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

As an adoptive parent, I understand how difficult the adoption and foster care system is on parents, adoptive parents, and children. Children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind face even more barriers than children without a disability. We know that they are more likely to be exposed to abusive living situations, have poorer attendance at school, and experience social isolation. There is a definite lack of safety and resources for these children, and they are desperately falling through the cracks in our system.

We must immediately address this situation and HB 2664 takes the first steps toward doing so. As others will mention in their testimony, this bill will require interpreters to be available for children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind as well as staff who are culturally and linguistically competent. It will also require the Department of Human Services to monitor child welfare programs to ensure that these youth are being adequately accounted for, tracked, and serviced.

Colleagues, HB 2664, reduces barriers for foster children to avoid falling through the cracks. Access to these services will help to prevent abuse, help children feel less isolated, and help to set up them up for success. We often say that every child can succeed in Oregon but without adequate cultural and linguistic supports, the barriers are nearly impossible to surmount.

I urge your aye vote.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deb Patterson".

Deb Patterson