

Submitter: Janice Vetter

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2696

February 2, 2023

Honorable Legislator

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court St NE

Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill

Dear Senator Wyden

My name is Janice Vetter and I am a retired RID certified Interpreter for the Deaf who resides in Central Oregon.

This Bill protects the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of hearing communities by establishing a licensure requirement for Sign Language interpreters. Currently in Oregon, anyone can legally represent themselves as a Sign Language interpreter whether or not they are qualified and provide services in settings such as emergency press-conferences, drug treatment facilities, or attorney-client meetings. This results in unqualified or unethical interpreting services, violations the rights of Deaf, Deafblind and hard of Hearing Oregonians and potentially causing great harm to consumers. Along with the risk the consumers, hiring entities such as government agencies are at risk of lawsuits if they hire interpreters who are unqualified. Licensure will establish standards for the profession, as well as protect consumers and hiring entities by requiring licensure to work as a Sign Language interpreter in Oregon. Over 30 states have established such requirements for Sign Language interpreters and the passing of this bill would ensure Oregon is in line with national best practices.

In my career as a certified interpreter, I have seen and heard of many instances where interpreters were providing services that were harmful to the Deaf due to inaccuracies in interpretation and unethical practices. It is especially important to me that this Bill pass as I have a son and daughter-in-law who are Deaf and they have a every right to access highly qualified interpreting services.

I respectfully ask you to support the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill because this law will protect the rights of Oregon's Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing citizens.

Sincerely,

Janice Vetter
65335 Tweed Rd.
Bend, OR 97703