

Rep. Rob Nosse
House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

January 27, 2023

SUBJECT: Support for HB 2696, the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill

To the Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Goodwin, Vice-Chair Nelson, and
members of the Committee:

I am writing to urge this Committee to support HB 2696.

My name is Tara Troup, I am a sign language interpreter. I am writing to urge the
Committee's support of HB2696.

This bill 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 whether or not they are qualified and provide services in settings
such as: emergency press conferences, drug treatment facilities, emergency medical
situations or attorney-client meetings. This results in unqualified or unethical interpreting
services, violating the rights of our Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing Oregonians
and potentially causing great harm to consumers. Along with the risk to the consumers,
hiring entities including government agencies are at risk of lawsuits if they hire
interpreters who are unqualified.

HB2696 will create a State Board of Sign Language Interpreters within Oregon Health
Authority, outline requirements for interpreter licensure, establish standards for the
profession and by doing this 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.

As a working interpreter, I see the detrimental effects of having underqualified
interpreters in medical settings. Patients do not get appropriate access to their own
medical care and providers lose confidence in their patient or in the worthiness of
providing interpreters at all. In Emergency situations, unqualified "interpreters" may
misrepresent vital information to an already vulnerable population, putting people at
further risk.

I respectfully ask for the Committee's support of HB2696 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,
Tara Troup