

Submitter: Jim House

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure: SB569

Hello, my name is Jim House. I am a native and former resident of Portland, Oregon, now living in Renton, Washington. In 2014 and 2015, I led "Turn On The Captions" a successful grassroots effort with Carol Studenmunc and David Viers that led to the passage of a mandatory public TV captioning display ordinance, which went into effect in December 2015. This first-of-its-kind ordinance had the full support of the Portland City Council and Commission on Disabilities along with local and state deaf, hard of hearing, and cross-disability groups. Since then, more than a dozen cities across the United States including your own Salem have passed similar ordinances with the goal of providing greater equity in access to severe weather notifications and other breaking news while away from home via captions that are visible on public televisions. Among these new ordinances that have developed, I note two key components for a successful captioning law are specifications for clear readable text and effective enforcement mechanisms. Following the lead of Seattle and Tacoma, Washington became the first to enact a statewide captioning law in 2021. With an increasing trend in natural disasters and the growing importance of captioning, it is now time for Oregon to follow suit and provide accessible information to the whole community in the Beaver State.