

Adam Logan, Secretary
Oregon Association of the Deaf
P.O. Box 1762
Gresham OR 97030
secretary@oad1921.org
971-331-1613

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Senator Gelser
900 Court St NE, S-211,
Salem, OR, 97301

Dear Committee Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Robinson, and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 569 regarding enforcement of closed captioning in public spaces.

Violations of existing law to turn closed captions on currently have no repercussions. SB 569 will give needed enforcement to existing law requiring public spaces to turn closed captions on. The mandate that sets up a training program via BOLI would reduce the frequency of violations, and save users of closed captions from expending substantial energy and reduce frequency of burn-out from having to educate the employees and owners of public spaces about the law regarding closed captions on top of other things like their communication needs, and ordinary concerns. From my reading of the bill as introduced is that financially, this bill would pay for itself.

An amendment I would like to see is the inclusion of subtitles in the language of the bill. I believe the bills surrounding closed captions should allow for closed captions or subtitles, whichever is appropriate. Televisions in public spaces typically show live television, but not always, on-demand content services and apps are becoming far more common, and those tend to provide subtitles more often than closed captions even if the button erroneously says "CC". Closed captions are not always available, whereas sometimes subtitles are, and vice versa. So I think it's important that at least one of the options is on if both options are available, in cases where subtitles are available when CC is not, the subtitles should be enabled, and vice versa, if subtitles are not available but CC is, the CC should be turned on.

Another concern I have is that this only applies to “TVs,” what about other displays that don’t technically count as a TV? People use computer monitors in some cases, or modular signage systems that display media content that is not technically a “TV”. I think “Display” is a broader and more inclusive term. Signage is a gray area that would ideally be accounted for as well.

This desire for amendments in no way reduces OAD’s support for this bill, we unanimously voted to support this bill as-is. These amendments I have suggested or any details of the existing law do not matter if violators continue to be ignorant of the law or if violators are permitted to knowingly disregard the law sans repercussions. As nice as amendments would be to close potential loopholes, I’d rather see this bill passed as law now rather than later and amend it as needed rather than see this bill die or get postponed another few years.

I and the Oregon Association of the Deaf strongly support this legislation and we urge you to vote in favor of SB 569. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Adam Logan

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