

The Honorable Rev. Dr. Deb Patterson
Chair, Oregon State Senate Committee on Health Care

The Honorable Cedric Hayden
Vice Chair, Oregon State Senate Committee on Health Care

Dear Senator Patterson and Senator Hayden,

My name is Sandra Fuentes and I am an Oregon-based healthcare interpreter in **Spanish**. I write to oppose Oregon Senate Bill 584. This bill would require the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to develop a web-based platform to support the scheduling and payment of interpreters for language access for Oregonian health care patients. I oppose this bill because it threatens to make my life and the life of many other interpreters much more difficult. I am currently one of the most requested qualified interpreters in my location. As an independent contractor and having been an interpreter for over 18 years, I have an excellent level of professionalism and a native command of both Spanish and English. Also, I have worked National events, Military training and a multitude of conference interpreting that has always resulted in great success and repeat requests. My skills and qualifications are measured by the companies that contract me and I have received training in multiple states. As an independent interpreter we receive certification for ethics training, medical terminology and HIPPA training.

Nationally, more than 80% of interpreters and translators work as Independent Contractors (ICs). As an IC, I set my hours – I can accept or refuse assignments according to my schedule. For each of the companies I work with, I had to demonstrate my skills and qualifications, including taking their language proficiency and interpreter skills tests.

Having the Oregon Health Authority replace the language companies working in Oregon will make my life more challenging. Instead of working with multiple companies and hospitals directly, which makes it possible to fill my schedule out, I will be dependent on the OHA to provide assignments in Oregon. The bill also does not clarify how rates will be set, or who sets them.

For these reasons I oppose Senate Bill 584

Respectfully,

Sandra Fuentes