

Submitter: Madonna Emonds
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB584

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 Madonna Yaguil Emonds, and I am an Oregon-based healthcare interpreter in Tagalog, Bikol and Rinconada. I'm writing 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 as an independent contractor much more difficult.

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. This is an enormous advantage to those of us who have child or eldercare responsibilities like myself, for example. I set my rates, and can negotiate rates with my clients. For each of the companies I work with, I had to demonstrate my skills and qualifications, including taking their tests, which in many cases are harder than the national certification tests offered in health care by CCHI and IMIA

I have been a qualified interpreter through OHA as well for few years now and I rarely get work through them.

Having the Oregon Health Authority replace the many language companies working in Oregon will make my life more challenging. especially because I live in a small town with very small pool of people that needing my services. Instead of being on the "rolodex" of several companies, which makes it possible to fill my schedule out, I will be dependent on one client to provide. The bill also does not clarify how rates will be set, or who sets them.

Language access in health care in Oregon could be improved, but this bill isn't the way to do it.

Respectfully,

Madonna Y. Emonds