

Submitter: Damian Espino  
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 Damian Espino, and I am a Video Remote Interpreter. 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, essentially replacing many of the language service providers (LSPs) that currently service Oregon patients, and employ interpreters like me.

I oppose this bill because replacing LSPs would unintentionally result in the loss of certain benefit for many interpreters like myself. In particular, the ability to work remotely – The current bill does not appear to support remote interpretation in any form. Remote work provides the kind of flexibility that allows some interpreters to work when they would otherwise be could not.

The intent of this bill appears to be the improvement of working conditions for Oregon-based medical interpreters. As it is written, bill 584 only supports interpreters who happen to do contract-based, on-site work exclusively. The bill actively impedes all other medical interpreters.

As such, bill 584 fails to fulfill it's purpose, and merits the opposition of all those who fight for health equity, language access, and better working conditions for all medical interpreters in Oregon.

The one thousand interpreters registered to with the HCI online registry is not enough to cover the thousands of calls that come out of your state. This amendment if carried out would hurt the limited English speaking patients mostly. This amendment is shortsighted as it doesn't account for the following:

Having enough people to cover overnight shifts.  
Having enough people that speak languages of lesser dissusion  
Crisis management. In the event of a crisis or pandemic, how would the need to

interpreters be fulfilled.

Sincerely,

Damian Espino