

Submitter: Karla Reina
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB584

Dear Senator Patterson and Senator Hayden,

On behalf of remote interpreters providing language access to the Limited English Proficient and Deaf and hard of hearing patients of Oregon, I beg you to oppose Bill 584.

I am embarrassed and ashamed by what some of our colleagues are attempting to do to the LEP, Deaf and HOH community in Oregon. Such a myopic amendment would not only limit services to this community but could in fact jeopardize their health and safety. This group of interpreters are solely concerned with their own job security and not taking into consideration that fact that unfortunately the need for interpreters far out way the amount of qualified available in-person/on sight interpreters available in the state of Oregon. Remote interpreters are a vital part of ensuring that all Oregonians obtain immediate language services, whenever and wherever the need arises, regardless of geographical location. As we well know, in healthcare an unscheduled need can arise at any moment, not allowing the provider with enough time to schedule such a service.

I am a professional, nationally certified interpreter for over 20 years and am honored to help Oregonians have full communicative autonomy in their healthcare. I've worked both as an on-site/in person interpreter as well as a virtual one. Both are integral forms of ensuring patient needs can be met. I work for a language provider who, contrary to the erroneous claims of a few, has been an excellent employer. I have fair wages, benefits, ergonomic and safe working conditions, professional development opportunities and a sense of pride and camaraderie with my colleagues in doing work that matters.

My company takes on the vital administrative duties this bill is aiming to give to the state; including but not limited to:

- Recruiting of qualified interpreters
- Vetting of interpreters
- Training of interpreters
- Human Resource support
- Management of Payroll, full benefits packages, rewards programs
- Scheduling and staffing to meet on demand customer needs in a multitude of languages
- Technical equipment provision and maintenance on all end points

- Quality assurance and oversight
- Community outreach

There are millions of remote sessions that take place each year in Oregon; 24/7, and it is a well-oiled machine, it requires all the language companies, and thousands of qualified medical interpreters to meet that need and our LEP citizens deserve us to continue progressing this immediate access process, not rolling back to a less efficient, cumbersome proposed system that only benefits a few.

My main concern as a Certified Medical Interpreter is that everyone can exert their right to obtaining Language Access Services. Anyone opposed to that is in the wrong profession. It is selfish and self-serving to presume that all the needs in the state of Oregon can be met by a handful of people who's obvious concern is job security and not meeting the needs of the community they claim to serve.

Thank you for your time and attention to this concerning matter!