

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the committee,

My name is Luisa Aldama and I'm testifying today from my own personal experience. For the past 13 years I have been an interpreter in the state of Oregon and Washington. For the longest time we were not required much, passing a language test and few others and we were able to be interpreters. One day someone thought that we could do better, we started to be required to get qualification or certification, all of that is good and expected as a professional.

Now my personal situation is: as an interpreter we need to be PAID accordingly and not being played around by agencies that don't see us as employees nor contractors (we can't set our own rates without being penalized by not getting appointments)

In 2020 I completed a job with a company here in Oregon, such a company has not paid me until today. I have called the department of labor, the state of Oregon and NO ONE KNOWS how to help me, as not being an employee. They suggest small claims which means I have to pay out of my own pocket court fees, lawyer fees, a service fee to serve the company the court paperwork and then maybe get paid.

Let's see how we are going to get right with the people who are being the bridge between the communities and the providers. We can't talk about inclusion when here in our own state we are underpaid and not properly validated as the professionals we are, interpreters need better remuneration.

Vote yes on SB584 so the state can pay us fairly and directly