

Submitter: Dmitry Linchuk
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB584

My Name is Dmitry Linchuk,
I manage the interpreting and translation company, Columbia Language Services, and I am writing this letter in opposition of this Bill. Columbia Language Services has been in business serving the Pacific northwest area since 1994, and have seen many changes within the interpreting and translation industry. One of these changes was a near identical bill as this one, which was enacted in Washington State. This created a centralized system which does not promote a competitive marketplace for services. When competition is eliminated, the incentive for quality and availability of service decrease while expenses increase, and the result of the bill passed in Washington state several years ago did exactly that, causing more harm than good by limiting interpreter access and availability to LEP clients/patients, as well as causing a substantial increase in the expense of services. Another factor to consider, During the height of the COVID pandemic, a large portion of interpreters with Washington state certifications had their certifications lapse, or exited the industry altogether. Also, the interpreter certification office was closed to any new applicants during this time, further expanding the shortfall of service availability. There are still many languages on the Washington side which have either limited, or no availability due to this. From these experiences, I believe this bill would be far more detrimental to those who are most in need interpretation services.

I appreciate your consideration,
Dmitry Linchuk
Columbia Language Services