



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

My name is Martha Soto, and I have been working as a health care interpreter in the Salem, Woodburn, Silverton area for 3 years. Many of our State's most vulnerable patients are those whose primary language is not English. For those people and their providers, the success of our healthcare system rests squarely in the hands of interpreters. We work closely with medical providers in the exam rooms, the ER, the operating room, home hospice, Cardiology, Chemotherapy, births, and deaths.

I wholeheartedly enjoy helping limited English speaking individuals express their needs and help providers meet those needs and receive a lot of gratitude from both patients and providers.

However, in my interpreting career, I've experienced lack of job security, since we have to compete for assignments. Often competing with interpreters that lack the qualifications but are sent through agencies with less pay.

I've also experienced favoritism in our field. Some healthcare facilities have developed close relations with interpreters and only ask for them. Those interpreters receive a full day of work leaving very little for others. It's very upsetting for me to watch an unqualified interpreter receive a large amount of assignments while I have sacrificed a lot while studying and stressed about passing exams to obtain better pay.

Different pay rates is another barrier, which makes it difficult to stay in the industry. Every agency puts a price on the interpreters which is unfair since that is based on how their contracts are written with healthcare facilities. As an interpreter, we invest our money and time on receiving extensive training and taking a series of exams. I write this testimony in hopes you will vote YES on SB 584. This bill would create a scheduling and payment system that allows for direct contracts with interpreters will reduce State spending on third-party scheduling companies while allowing interpreters to earn industry-standard rates.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration and urge you to vote "YES" on SB 584

Thank you for your time,

Martha Soto