

Dear Senator Patterson and Senator Hayden,

My name is **Anitha Johny** and I work for Linguava. 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.

I oppose this bill because replacing LSPs would unintentionally result in the loss of the following benefits for many interpreters:

- **Loss of Liability Protection** – In order to participate in medical translation, Interpreters like myself assume risk. LSPs help mitigate that risk and provide protection via the service providers' insurance policies and comprehensive credentialing procedures. Navigating these complexities can be daunting for individual interpreters.
- **Loss of Education and Career Advancement** – LSPs typically provide high-quality training and educational resources that are foundational in advancing interpreter careers and expertise, at no cost or at a drastically reduced cost to the interpreter.
- **Loss of Consistency of Income** – Instead of being able to interpret for several LSPs, I will be dependent on one client (the OHA) to provide all my assignments in Oregon. As a result, it would also seem that I would be dependent on OHA to set my compensation rates, though the bill's current language does not account for this.
- **Loss of 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.

Please also consider the following questions when looking into the bill:

What is the true intention of the bill? Does it truly take into account all the aspects of a state run LSP
What negative impact does it have for the language autonomy of patients who are in critical need of this service? Does it have any negative impacts to interpreters? Does it have negative impacts for the healthcare clients who are trying to legally provide critical and on time services for their patients? Does the state have the capacity to create this portal and spend millions of dollars to keep it going and provide an efficient and beneficial service?

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.

Sincerely,

Anitha Johny