

JACQUELINE SALZINGER

Research and educational development, writing support, and Arabic-language cultural exchange.

Date: February 27, 2023
To: Senate Committee on Rules
From: Jacqueline Salzinger
Re: Support both SB 612 and SB 911

Dear Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

I write to you as a concerned citizen, a former volunteer translator, and an Oregonian who knows firsthand the importance of trusted and skilled interpreters. I urge you to pass this legislation that will help vulnerable residents of Oregon access the critical state services they are entitled to and need.

As an Oregonian who has worked outside of the U.S. in multilingual settings, I am intimately aware with how vital it is to have a skilled interpreter in order to meaningfully access critical legal, medical, and other state services. Without being able to express oneself in such potentially life-altering situations, it can become nearly impossible to access the care and services one needs and has a right to. It is difficult to fully explain the feeling of being in front of a doctor, lawyer, or government official without the literal ability to meaningfully speak for oneself and be understood in any way; from my own personal experiences as an Oregonian who has recently lived abroad in non-English-speaking settings, I can tell you that it is frightening, unsettling, and deeply anxiety-inducing, with potentially dangerous outcomes. With these two bills this session, SB 612 and SB 911, we now have the chance to dramatically reduce such occurrences of voicelessness in our state!

As the daughter of a registered nurse in Oregon, I also feel obligated to remind everyone reading this that access to quality healthcare services is *not* a simple matter of just getting someone in front of a provider. The dedicated work that medical interpreters, medical assistants, nurses, and others perform day in and day out is nuanced, skilled, and absolutely essential to the successful working of any healthcare interaction. Without *each* of these individuals duly supported and positioned to do their jobs well, the entire interaction of reaching medical care can break down and leave patients without the care that they need. **Paying interpreters what they deserve for their skilled labor and training them in a way that aligns with what community leaders believe will best serve minority populations** is one step among many needed to fix Oregon's healthcare system, particularly from the standpoint of equity. It is a clear step forward that we can take with the legislation proposed for our state today.

These two bills were developed in close consultation with community members. The leaders and organizations behind their development have provided clear recommendations for how to build off previous, well-intentioned laws that require further support to *actually achieve* our state's goals of equal access to services like healthcare—healthcare for *all*. Tens of thousands of our neighbors in this state would be positively affected by the passage of these bills.

Minority language community leaders are here providing Oregon lawmakers a clear path forward by advocating for this legislation. They know what is best for their languages and their communities, and I sincerely hope the voices and efforts of these communities will be heeded in Salem during this session. This issue requires urgent solution and cannot wait.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and again I implore you to move these bills through committee promptly, on to the next phase of enacting this vital legislation for our state,

Jackie Salzinger
Oregon House District 33