

Date:

For: Senate Rules Committee

RE: Support for SB 612 y SB 911

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee. 1

I am writing to you to ask for your support of the SB 612 and SB 613 bill proposals. It is a well-known fact that the Oregon Legislature has made significant progress in ensuring that the inhabitants of Oregon have the right to understand and be understood. Despite these advancements, there is still a lack of quality interpretation services for those who speak indigenous languages from modern Mexico, Central America, and South America.

That is why the SB 612 and SB 613 bill proposals are crucial. SB 613 will establish a commission for indigenous communities in Oregon within the Oregon Office of Advocacy Commissions, ensuring that the voices of indigenous communities are represented and have a direct voice in policies that concern them. SB 612 will allow for the development of language competence assessment mechanisms for indigenous languages, which will allow interpreters to demonstrate their language skills and obtain formal accreditation. This will also allow indigenous interpreters to receive a dignified salary.

It is important to remember that over 35,000 residents of Oregon speak an indigenous language as their primary language. The current lack of indigenous interpretation services too often results in indigenous people in Oregon being denied vital care due to language barriers, inability to access critical services, or incarceration and deportation.

Therefore, I ask for your support of these important bill proposals. Together we can ensure that all people in Oregon have access to quality interpretation services and that indigenous communities have a voice in decision-making that affects them.

Sincerely,

Community member from Washington county