

Date: February 28, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Rules

From: Karen based in Portland, Oregon 97209

RE: Support SB 612 and SB 911

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

My name is Karen Caudillo Roman, and I live in NW Portland, Oregon. I am writing in support of SB612 and SB911. As a child of immigrants who spoke Spanish with little English was known in my household, I can attest to the struggles that young people and working people go through to be understood and comprehended. Let alone understanding that Indigenous languages from Mexico, Central America, and South America struggle with few interpreters and no certifications available from the State of Oregon.

These interpreters serve some of the most marginalized communities who work in some of the most challenging jobs in the state, usually farm workers, and lack the adequate pay to provide such an essential service. Over 35,000 Oregonians speak an Indigenous language as their primary language. Still, the lack of Indigenous interpretation services often leads to Indigenous Oregonians being denied life-saving care due to language barriers, an inability to access critical services, or imprisonment and deportation. Access to understanding should be a right to access in Oregon. Another issue I have heard from community members is that many students who speak indigenous languages must learn Spanish and English simultaneously without direct support in their primary language. We need to start addressing this issue and providing avenues for folks who know these languages to add credentials to their toolbelt to understand better how to support these Indigenous communities.

SB 911 will establish a commission for Original Peoples from South America, Central America, and Mexico within the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office, ensuring that the voices of Indigenous communities are represented in state government and have a direct say in policy proposals that concern Indigenous Oregonians.

I appreciate you all taking the time to review SB 612 and SB911. **I urge you to support these essential bills.**

With gratitude,

Karen C.