

To: Senate Committee on Health Care
From: Daniel Solomon, Oregon Interpreters in Action
Re: Support for Statewide Health Care Interpreter Portal

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

My name is Carolina Romero Ramirez. I am a certified healthcare interpreter.

I have been an interpreter since 2015 in various states and started interpreting in Oregon in 2019. It is true what people say about loving what you do, and you won't ever feel like you are working a day in your life. I have learned and grown so much personally and professionally in this profession that I pursued an M.A. in Translation and Interpreting Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign.

Although I have been able to secure some jobs through some agencies or Language Services Providers (LSPs), I have not been able to satisfy my financial needs for paying my school loans. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had through the SLPs because after all to be successful at interpreting one needs knowledge and a lot of experience.

Facilitating communication in our communities is detrimental, especially in the time we live in. This is a collective work in which we are the bridge for many unheard voices, and it is only fair that our profession receives a fair wage, benefits, and protection in the case of not being able to work if we get sick, or being able to have paid vacation to enjoy some time with our families.

I urge you to vote YES for SB 1578, you will be having a significant impact on thousands of lives who rely on what we do. The fact that you vote yes for this bill will also help interpreters to be able to afford professional development training, getting certified and qualified so that we can continue to provide high-quality interpretation services. I also take the time to clarify that it is not enough to be bilingual to interpret, just like any other profession, we do need to study, and take continuing education credits to keep abreast of language evolution, culture(s), terminology, and ethics.

It is with tremendous urge that I ask you to approve SB 1578 so that we, the interpreters, finally receive the benefits we deserve as professionals so that communities receive higher-quality language support.