

Dear Senators,

I am writing to directly oppose bill SB1578 with a focus on the detrimental impact it would have on language access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) patients and the hindrance it poses to healthcare providers seeking interpreter services.

The proposed portal under SB1578 raises significant concerns about language access for LEP patients and may infringe on Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The current Oregon Health Authority (OHA) registry, with only a small number of represented languages, pales in comparison to the expansive array of languages that our community requires, more than 130 different languages. The portal's limitations would hinder the timely and accurate communication essential for providing optimal healthcare services for a vast number of languages, and especially languages of lesser diffusion. By limiting language options and not prioritizing the needs of LEP individuals, the bill runs counter to the principles of equitable healthcare, jeopardizing the quality of care for a substantial portion of our community.

Healthcare providers also heavily rely on "on-demand" remote interpreter services, which are crucial for effective communication, especially when the majority of interpreting services are provided remotely rather than in-person. SB1578, in its current form, handicaps the ability of healthcare professionals to access the necessary interpreter services promptly.

I urge you to reconsider the implications of SB1578 and explore alternative solutions that prioritize language access for **ALL** patients and support healthcare providers to deliver the best care possible. Language access in health care in Oregon should be improved, but this bill is a step in the wrong direction.

Respectfully,

David Dietz

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