

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair
Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Bill

Dear Senator Monnes Anderson:

I am writing to thank you and your colleagues for hearing the amendments to the Sign Language Licensure bill, SB 950. This is a critical piece of legislation for myself, my sign language interpreter colleagues, and the many Oregonians, both Deaf and hearing, who depend on our services to access multiple aspects of their lives.

SB 950 clarifies and streamlines the licensure law that was created during the 2023 session for sign language interpreters in Oregon. The last year of the rule-making process has revealed where the original statute created redundancies and confusion, halting the essential work of the newly established Board of Sign Language Interpreter Licensure under Oregon Health Authority. This, in addition to exorbitant fees for multiple licenses, required credentials, and continuing education costs, makes it difficult to establish and maintain one's practice as a free-lance, independent contractor ASL interpreter in Oregon.

Currently, these are the conditions faced by the majority of our workforce. I am concerned that the long-term impact could be fewer interpreters living in Oregon, and thus, fewer interpreters available to meet the needs of our local communities. The goal of licensure is to protect and promote equity for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Oregonians, but the current statute as written is derailing that goal and causing harm. The amendments put forth in SB 950 will get us back on track.

I respectfully ask you to support the Oregon Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Amendment Bill (SB 950) to save time, money, and confusion for the state and for interpreters to improve our ability to protect and serve the rights of Oregon's Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing citizens.

Sincerely,



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