

Submitter: Domingo Pascual Martinez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2976

My name is Domingo Pascual Martinez.

I am an interpreter in Akateko and Q'anjob'al and a member of the Collective of Indigenous Interpreters of Oregon, convened by Pueblo Unido.

All Indigenous communities in the state of Oregon should have access to quality interpretation services when needed, but barriers to this reality remain for the thousands of Indigenous language speakers in Oregon from Mexico, Central America, and South America.

During my time as an indigenous language interpreter in this state of Oregon from 1990 until today, I have seen these barriers firsthand.

In 2018, a patient in a hospital was suffering from infections in her private parts. She did not know how to speak Spanish, much less English. She could not find a way to explain to the doctor what part of her body was affected because she did not have an interpreter in her Q'anjob'al language. The doctor prescribed cream for her body for hives, but without effect, and her illness continued to worsen.

At a school in North Portland in 2022, a child did not speak Spanish and his mother did not speak Spanish either. The school teachers were already treating the child with psychological problems, until they found an interpreter in Akateko, and the problem was resolved.

It is very important to me that interpreters of Indigenous languages are included in the interpretation system and that they are qualified and credentialed as in any other language.